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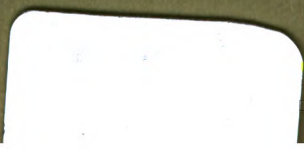
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Bucking the sagebrush

Charles John Steedman, Charles Marion Russell





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POINTING OUT THE TRAIL

Bucking the Sagebrush

or

The Oregon Trail in the Seventies

By

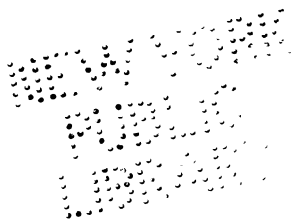
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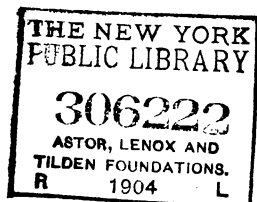
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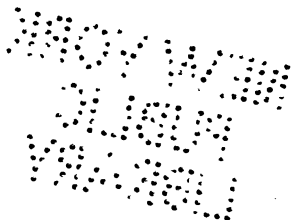


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BY

CHARLES J. STEEDMAN

Published, November, 1904



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PREFACE

THE following account of my experiences during my first trip over the Oregon trail, taken from a diary that I kept at the time and letters which I wrote home, I have written for a dear little friend, my son, so that if he lives to reach man's estate he may know something of his father's early life. Every incident actually occurred, and I have recorded nothing from hearsay. I do not claim accuracy in the distances given, as I had no way of measuring them except by rule of thumb.

The wonderful changes that have taken place in the Northwest during the past quarter of a century can hardly be appreciated by the best informed of the "stay-at-home" public. If the reader will turn to a map and note the several great trans-continental lines and their branches which bring that section almost to his door, he may be surprised to learn that in 1878 only thirty miles of railroad then existed—from Wallula to Walla in Washington.

Herds of cattle numbering many thousand

heads could be driven a thousand miles, practically in a straight line, without meeting an obstacle in the shape of a fence to bar their way, and they subsisted for months on prairie grass alone. Every pound of food was hauled in wagons, for there were only a few points between the Blue Mountains of Oregon and the North Platte, in Wyoming, where a sack of flour or a side of bacon could be bought. Likewise, it was not uncommon to travel two or three weeks without seeing a human being other than your own outfit.

As to the truth of my statements about the Mormons, I will simply say that now it is a matter of history.

Possibly, I may have thrown a side-light on the cow-puncher, as I know him. To me he sizes up as other "humans," good, bad, and indifferent. He has one characteristic, however, which is most prominent—the fear of ridicule. To have his neck broken by a horse is awkward, to get shot is unfortunate; but to appear ridiculous—that breaks his heart. Having a fellow-feeling in this respect and knowing that prefaces are apt to be wearisome, I will rope and tie this one.

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to my friend, Mr. Charles M. Russell, for the ad-

mirable illustrations which he has prepared for this book. For permission to use certain smaller drawings by Mr. Russell my thanks are due to Mr. Wallace David Coburn, the author of that volume of spirited Western verse, *Rhymes from a Round-up Camp*.

C. J. S.



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BUCKING THE SAGEBRUSH

CHAPTER I

A TENDERFOOT'S TRIALS

MY forefathers, I am convinced, must have been rovers by nature. I am led to believe this not only because they do not seem to have possessed ancestral halls and gardens on land that eventually became business centres in large cities and valuable for corner lots, but from an inherent restlessness and insatiable desire that I have for exploring new fields.

At the close of my school-days, I entered a real-estate office in Boston, where I acquired a pronounced dislike for all office work, together with a proneness to attacks of indigestion. However, after two discontented years there, my chance came, and in 1876 I left my

position, which was paying me \$5 a week, and against the advice of my family accepted a "board-and-clothes" proposition on a sheep ranch in Wyoming.

With my new employer I gladly left Boston in March of that same year, my mind filled with visions of all sorts of adventures, and the rapturous thought that I should soon be careering across the open prairie on a wild mustang, clad in buckskin, with rifle and pistol, spurs and sombrero.

My contract was for a year, and stipulated that in return for my work I was to receive board and lodging; whatever knowledge of the business I could acquire in that time was gratis.

I served out my apprenticeship and six months more, which, in my opinion, was probably the best thing that could have happened to me. I was far from strong physically when I arrived; the experience was likewise a hard one: but before I left I could eat anything that was filling, with or without salt; could go indefinitely without a bath, and knew what it meant to work from daylight to dark, six days in the week and half a day on Sunday.

Instead of riding mustangs, firing six-shooters and rifles as in my dreams, I was put to

work digging post-holes, shovelling sand and hay, and for excitement clipping sheep. During the time for rest I had to saw wood, or a course of cooking was thrown in. I shall never forget the first load of sand that I shovelled. I was so completely exhausted before I got through that I had to lean against the wagon wheel to prevent falling.

The altitude of the ranch was seventy-six hundred feet,—about a thousand feet higher than Mt. Washington,—and that atmosphere was so rarefied that if the guileless tenderfoot attempted the slightest extra exertion he would find the wind completely knocked out of him.

After the first month or so my appetite grew to such proportions that I never seemed able to get filled up. On Sunday I would read the recipes in a cook-book and try to imagine how the various dishes would taste.

The ranch belonged to Sargent and Homer, both Eastern men, and was situated about eight miles from Laramie City, Wyoming Territory, on the line of the Union Pacific Railroad. Besides the owners, there were a young man named Balch, who, like myself, was learning the business, and two or three sheep-herders. The two bosses took their time at cooking, assisted by Balch and myself.

We worked in teams, and most of the summer was occupied in making hay and hauling fence rails and firewood from the mountains. In the spring we had the sheep to shear and dip, while in the winter we baled the hay and hauled it to a place called Tie Siding, a short distance from the highest point reached by the railroad and with an altitude of about 8000 feet. It was there sold to the contractors who supplied ties to the railroad company. The routine of our work was unchanged for months at a time; one crew baled hay and did the chores for a week while the other hauled, and so on, turn and turn about.

We usually had our breakfast at 4.30 A.M., for in order to make the round trip—25 to 30 miles, with one way all up-hill—it was necessary to make an early start.

Delays were frequently caused by our getting stuck in snow-drifts, but as a rule by two o'clock we had unloaded, eaten our dinner, and were ready for the return trip, and as, in that locality, the prevailing wind in winter is northwesterly, we always had it in our faces going home.

It was not an unusual thing to have the mercury go to zero or several degrees below, and the ride, which lasted two or three hours on an

empty hayrack with no protection, was a tough one. Owing to the dryness of the atmosphere the cold does not penetrate as it does in the lower altitudes, otherwise we never could have stood it, and as it was, we frequently had our cheeks and noses frost-bitten.

The romance of Western life was soon knocked out of me, and many a time I felt like jumping an East-bound train and bidding good-by to the country for good. My pride and lack of money, however, stood in the way, and then, too, in spite of my hard experience I still yearned for the sombrero, mustang, and spurs.

During the first year of my stay on this ranch, my trips to the town of Laramie were few and far between. After seeing it once I did not hanker after it. Like all small railroad towns, it was small and rather depressing.

At that time, there were two residents, or rather frequenters, of the town who were, or became, celebrated. Wm. E. Nye, or "Bill Nye," the humorist, was one. His light was then undiscovered and he was sparring for wind on the meagre fees of a Justice of the Peace and Notary Public. I got to know him well and, like all others who came in contact with him, was impressed by his gentle nature.

The other man always reminded me of Nye because he was so different. His name was John Watkins—he preferred to be called Jack, and his wish was always complied with. Mr. Jack Watkins had been a star pupil of Mr. Slade, whose history has been written by Mark Twain, and he studied during the days of the overland stage. As many persons know, Mr. Slade's end was sudden, and at this time I think Watkins was about the last of the real simon-pure, all-around desperadoes left in that section. It was said of him that he never—that is while in the "city"—carried his "guns" insolently exposed. When the proper time came he would produce them from the bosom of his shirt. This fashion, I understand, first came into vogue in the "Seven-River Country" in Texas.

Watkins had taken a very great dislike to the Sheriff of Albany County and his deputy, Larry Fee, because they had been rude to him. They had so far forgotten etiquette as to attempt to arrest him while he was asleep in one of his hidden retreats in the mountains. When surprised, he bowed to the inevitable, but asked permission to roll up his blankets. This he was permitted to do. Then he promptly knocked down his would-be captors,



ONE YEAR ON A RANCH, '76

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
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U.S.A.

using the blankets as a club, grabbed one of their guns, and escaped before they could recover their wits. He got away, but the memory of the attempted arrest rankled, so one day about noon he rode up to the court-house in Laramie City and made a call on the Sheriff. When he came out the Sheriff was dead and Larry Fee had a bullet in the hip, which disarranged most of his plans for a while. Watkins stopped long enough to get a drink and then skipped the country. Vague rumors drifted up from Mexico that he had reformed and was running a big freight outfit and Sunday-school, but they were never confirmed.

We had lively times in other respects also. In June of that year, 1876, the Custer massacre occurred on the Rosebud in Montana, about two hundred and fifty miles north; and although there was little trouble to be expected from the Sioux, it was a very nervous summer, as the Shoshones to the north and west, and the Utes to the southwest, were restless and ugly, and no one knew when h—l would break loose.

To add to the excitement, two or three companies of the Second Cavalry, stationed at Fort Saunders, about three miles from Laramie, were sent to join General Crook on his

campaign, which lasted way into the winter and brought Sitting Bull to his milk.

In 1879 the Meeker massacre on the White River Indian agency occurred, and in September Major Thornburg lost his life and a large part of his command while on his way to the scene of the trouble. In fact, until 1880 we always had some kind of Indian trouble on hand.

At the end of my year and a half I decided that I did not care for the sheep business, as there was not excitement enough, so I formed a partnership with a man named Rand and launched out for myself. My cash capital was small, and all Rand had was a ranch on the Little Laramie River, but we had lots of faith in our ability.

Rand had been in the West much longer than I, and was looked upon as being quite a stockman, because he had lived two years on a mule ranch in Missouri. Prior to that his life had been spent in a drug house in Boston. We soon discovered that we had not sufficient capital to be considered cattle kings, so we took in two more partners, one of whom was Balch, the other an apprentice on another sheep ranch. They also had been thoroughly trained in the business, one having worked in

a crockery shop and the other in a brass foundry, and both likewise came from Boston.

Our copartnership papers were drawn up by "Bill" Nye. About that time Nye made the remark, "All the United States needs to make a navy is some ships, as they have all the water necessary." In the same vein he told us all we required was some cattle to become cowmen, as we had all the prairie at our disposal.

After the papers were duly signed and sealed and the transaction ratified with several drinks over the bar of Jack Connor's saloon, we drew lots to see which of the three juniors should join Rand in a proposed trip to buy cattle, and thereby lay the foundation of the colossal fortunes we saw in the future. I got the lucky number. I was then barely twenty-one; and when I now compare my sense of absolute confidence with my complete lack of knowledge of the business and of the country into which we were going, I cannot help feeling that, after all, youth is a glorious thing.



CHAPTER II

IN MORMON LAND

WE had been busy for a month or more making inquiries as to where to go to buy cattle. We did not want to buy a herd already made or one that had been brought from Texas, which up to the year before had supplied the market. We decided first to try southern Utah, and, if we failed to find what we wanted, then to go to eastern Oregon. In accordance with this plan, Rand and I boarded the train for Salt Lake City early in the month of February, 1878, our idea being to make that city our base while prospecting the country to the south.

Salt Lake City at that date was a small place in comparison with what it is now, yet, owing to the broad streets and length of the city blocks, it gave the impression of being a very large town. I had been so long away from any city that plate-glass shop windows

and horse-cars had a quieting effect. We arrived in the evening, and as we drove down the main street it seemed to me that we were on Broadway.

Brigham Young had been dead about a year, and the Mormons ran everything as far as the municipal government was concerned. I was warned by a gentile resident to be very careful how I ran afoul of the police, as it was one of their pastimes to club the unwary unbeliever for very small cause.

The shops were all on the main street between Second and Fourth, south, and I imagine the bulk of their trade was with the gentile. The faithful, or Saints, especially those from the rural districts, did most of their trading at the Z. C. M. I., which means Zion's Co-operative Mercantile Institution. This enterprise was under the control of the Church, and I was told that the manager usually retired with a competence after a year or two. The office of manager was generally given to some successful missionary, to reward him for the years spent on starvation wages while spreading the Mormon doctrine in foreign parts.

The great temple was then only built to the second story and the tithing yard was in

full blast. Every Saturday it was crowded with farmers' wagons bringing in their contributions to the fund. The Mormons have always been devoted to things theatrical, and in the days before the railroad they had many plays, most of which were rendered by "home talent." The Opera House had great seating capacity and, it was said, had the largest stage of any theatre in the United States. I was told on good authority that in early times there were bins built in the ticket office to hold the country produce paid in lieu of money for tickets to the show. I have no reason to doubt the truth of this, as the management was controlled by the Church, and even in my time the supply of money among the farmers was very limited. I presume the tariff read something after this fashion :

Admission,	1 peck potatoes.
Gallery,	3 doz. eggs or a gallon of milk.
Orchestra chairs,	1 bushel of oats.
Proscenium box,	1 load of hay.

The streets were all well swept and the clear running water in all the gutters increased the aspect of cleanliness. A large proportion of the dwelling-houses were one and a half

stories high, built of adobe bricks, white-washed and sheltered by trees and surrounded by gardens; in summer they were covered with vines. With the background of high, snow-capped mountains, it was a most beautiful spot.

There were some hot sulphur springs just north of the town, most efficacious as a cure for morning headaches as a result of too close a study of the manners and customs of the inhabitants.

All religious sects, outside the Mormon Church, were very tolerant. I remember going to a charity ball given for the benefit of a Catholic orphanage, or something of that kind, and finding that two of the Reception Committee were Jews.

A popular pastime of the town was that of matching coins. A man would walk into a hotel office, store, or saloon, and slap his hand on the counter, palm down, at the same time murmuring "ten times for twenty" or "five times for ten." This to the uninitiated was puzzling. What he meant was, that he would match any one in the crowd ten times for twenty dollars a time, or five times for ten dollars a time. Generally his challenge was taken. There was some very high poker-playing also, and I have

known of games to last a couple of weeks. Those were the days when to own a silver mine meant "money in both pockets," and the mine owners "spent their money like road-agents." The gentile population of Salt Lake City was made up of mine owners, miners or speculators in mines, merchants, and railroad people.

I saw here for the first time two real Danites, or "avenging angels," as they were also known. They were the secret police of the Mormon Church. If any convert became weary of his surroundings or got disgusted and tried to leave the country, or if he bucked the authority of the Church, he disappeared from his "sphere of influence" and, with the help of these same Danites, tackled the "open door" or rather the "gates ajar." The one I remember best was named Porter Rockwell. He was a short, stockily-built man with rather a pleasant face, very deeply lined. He wore his hair long, but it was plaited in two pig-tails and coiled on either side of the back of his head. His chief occupation was getting drunk, and he was always in the company of two men. Report had it that these attendants were employed by the Mormon authorities to keep him from telling his tales when under the influence

of liquor. Bill Hickman was the other, but he only appeared once in a while, as he lived on a ranch some distance off. If any one cares to hear more about these gentlemen, let him read the confession of John R. Lee.

From my own observations made during a period of ten years both in Utah and Idaho, I can state without qualification that in my opinion the true "endowment-robed Mormon" would stop at no treachery, deceit, or cruelty to carry out the orders of the president or the twelve apostles of the Church.

After a stay of about a week we left for the cattle country. The only railroad running south was known as the Utah Southern, with its terminus at York, ninety miles from Salt Lake City. We left early in the morning and upon arriving at York, took a "jerky" or one-horse stage to Nephi, some ten or twelve miles off. We had been advised to put ourselves under the wing of an old English Mormon named Goldsborough (pronounced Goldsbruff), who was a leader of the people and one of the original Mormon settlers who came in with Brigham Young. He kept the hotel at Nephi.

Our landlord was a man seventy-five years old; he had five wives living, and we were shown his twenty-fifth child, a baby about two

years old. His first wife was a sweet-faced English woman several years older than he, and whom he had married in the old country before he joined the Mormons. He told us he was a prosperous greengrocer in a small town in England when he "got religion." He sold everything at a week's notice and emigrated to Utah. The hotel was managed by the fourth wife, his first wife being too feeble to do much work; the second and third were running his ranches, and the fifth kept a millinery shop in the town. The sons and daughters also worked in the various departments, so that the whole family made quite a lively firm.

The hotel, or rather the inn, was a low-studded, one-and-a-half-story, rambling affair. In the public parlor was a big open fireplace piled high with blazing cedar logs, and it all seemed very comfortable after our cold, tedious ride. I can smell the burning cedar now.

We made a contract with Goldsborough to drive us in a two-seated wagon to a point about a hundred and fifty miles farther south, and started out a day or two afterwards. I doubt if there was a gentile, barring Rand and myself and a United States marshal, in the whole country, and I know that we were looked upon with suspicion and dislike, in spite of the fact

that we were vouched for by our friend "Goldsbruff."

During our long drives he gave us a detailed account of the trials and hardships of the pioneer settlers. The poor creatures were between the devil and the deep sea when they struck Utah; at times it almost meant starvation either to go or stay, with the added certainty of being held up by the "avenging angels" if they went. So they stayed and finally made fertile valleys and plateaus out of a sagebrush desert.

Mormon towns all look very much alike. They are more picturesque than those seen along the railway lines in the central West. The reason for it is the almost universal use of adobe brick, and in a great many cases thatched roofs. This may all be changed now, but at that time little if any building material was imported and everything as far as possible was made from home products. An illustration of this is the fact that the great organ in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City was built from wood grown in Utah.

On this trip we received more evidence that there was practically no ready money in circulation among the people. All trading was done at the "co-op" stores. For instance, I saw a little girl trade eggs for matches in one

of these stores, and I presume other staples were bought in the same way. These "co-ops" had some system of exchange with the headquarters in Salt Lake City, so that their produce was shipped to places, such as mining camps and railroad towns, etc., where it was sold for cash to the gentile, and credited to them against stocks of goods and groceries supplied by the head concern.

We spent a night at a town called Manti, and as there was no hotel we put up at the house of the bishop of that "Stake," it being the unwritten law that bishops had the first right to gather in the shekels of the hated gentile. In the course of conversation with one of the bishop's sons, we learned there was to be a dance given that night in the Town Hall. We were desirous of mingling for a short time with the 400 of Manti, and we asked him to get us an "invite." This he promised to do. We did not mingle, however, as the Committee opined that if any damned gentile showed up he was likely to get "thumped." Such was, and I have no doubt still is, the love of the Saints for the "white men."

We were at the very first struck by the number of deformed and half-witted children we saw in the different towns and villages

through which we passed, but later we found out the reason.

In one town, I think it was called Ephraim's Field, so called from the fact that the land was all cultivated in one large tract by the villagers in common, we tried to find the bishop and called at four of his houses in search of him. Goldsborough told us, and this I will take my oath to, that this bishop was married to a mother and three daughters, and that some of the sons and daughters by these marriages had in turn married each other, or at all events there were grandchildren in the family without any outside "entangling alliances." To figure out the relationship of the second and third generations is rather dizzy work, but it explains the deformed progeny and idiots.

Most of these people seem to be of English, Swedish, or Danish descent, and a more benighted-looking lot of white people I never saw—nor an uglier. I don't remember having seen one attractive girl face during our stay, and we had good opportunities on Sundays to inspect them, as we generally brought up in a town where there was a good-sized tabernacle. From the crowds I should judge that every man, woman, and child in the surrounding country was there.

I listened to one or two addresses, but don't remember much about them. The style was about what might be looked for in a kindergarten of the present day. Some persons may think that I am prejudiced against the Mormons,—I don't think I am unjustly so. Any American citizen naturally would be more or less alarmed to find that a large and rapidly increasing number of his fellow-citizens (?) are blissfully ignorant that there is such a geographical division of the North American continent as the United States, and believe that the ruler of the country is the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Such was the case in 1878 in many parts of Utah, and I have little doubt that in many of the small Mormon settlements situated in Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Nevada, and New Mexico, the same belief holds to-day.

Many people throughout the United States are liable to think that Utah holds all the Mormons, but if they take the trouble to inquire they will find that the political complexion of all the States given above is very much influenced by the Mormon vote, which is absolutely controlled by the Church. I have read articles in defence of these people and was especially impressed by one, written, I believe,

by one of the most prominent educators and divines of America after a visit to Salt Lake City.

The astuteness and tact displayed by the head men of the organization were fully demonstrated by the way they stuffed this eminent divine with prunes. This is not cattle driving, however, so we will return to our two-seated wagon.

After leaving Manti we kept on in a south-westerly direction until we reached the Sevier River, and followed it up almost to Beaver, when we gave it up as a bad job, turned north, and found our way back to Nephi, and thence to Salt Lake City. At Nephi I saw some of the finest freighting outfits one could imagine. Everything at that time had to be hauled in wagons to and from the railroad terminus at York and the settlements and mining camps as far south as Parowan and St. George. These outfits generally consisted of three wagons and were hauled by eight span of mules. The wagons were trailed one behind the other and the "tread" diminished in width from the "lead-wagon" to the last trail. This was done in order that in heavy mud or sand the wheels should not turn in the same rut, thereby increasing the risk of miring

down ; it also made them pull easier. The mules ranged from great sixteen-hand American mules in the pole, down to a span of thirteen-hand Spanish mules on the lead. They were driven with a "jerk line" manipulated by the "mule skinner" who rode the nigh wheeler.

The nigh leader of a mule team ranks with the best-trained elephant, and what he does n't know about soul-compelling swear words is not worth serious thought. I will try to explain the principle of the jerk line.

It is a single rein running through rings on the sides of the headstalls, from the bit of the nigh leader to the "skinner" as he sits on the wheeler. A light spruce pole reaches from the collar of the nigh to the bit of the off leader. When the driver wishes to go to the left, he gives a long, steady pull on the jerk line ; when to the right, he gives the line a series of short, sharp jerks. To see a well-trained mule team start a heavy load is like watching a well-executed military evolution. At the first command, every animal gets into line behind the one ahead ; at the second, they straighten out the tugs and get well into their collars ; and at the third they simply *lean* forward and continue so to do until the load

starts. There is no jerking or plunging, but woe betide the laggards! The expert "mule skinner" can almost play a tune with his black snake.

Sounds travel a long distance in that dry, clear atmosphere, especially at night, and the music made by the jingle of the bells fastened to the collars of the "lead-mules," interspersed, seemingly, with the rattle of small-arms (a sign that the "skinner" has awakened from dreams of home and home-cooking and is ready for a little plain sow-belly and coffee), is rapidly dying out in the Great West, and is being replaced by the screech of the locomotive whistle and the clang of the trolley bell.

Our information of the possibilities of getting a herd in this section had been misleading, so having lost three weeks' time, we found ourselves in Salt Lake City no nearer our object, and therefore decided to push on to Oregon. Before making this decision, we were told of a herd that was for sale in Nevada. They ranged near a town called Cherry Creek, in Elko County, about seventy miles due south of Wells, on the line of what was then the Central Pacific Railroad.

Thinking it wise to go there and investigate before making the long trip to Oregon, after

resting for a day or two at Salt Lake City, we took to the railroad again and were dumped off in the middle of the night at Wells, from which metropolis the stages ran to Cherry Creek.

This was my first experience in real Western staging, and it certainly filled the bill. We left Wells at four o'clock in the morning, in company with a brother of Senator Jones of Nevada and a mining superintendent named Coughlin, in a six-horse stage, and from then until late that evening we struck the road only in the "high places."

We breakfasted before starting, but, with a naturally good appetite and the jolting, I thought before we reached the dinner station that I should have to begin on the leather curtain straps to appease my hunger. The swing team of our second relay was made up of a green broncho and a balky horse, and the way the poor brutes were "shaped up" was a caution to snakes. We arrived about on time, spent the following day riding about trying to find the herd we had come to see, but without success, and left on the return trip the next morning at the usual hour of four A.M.

I am writing to be put on record as stating that I believe all stage-coach builders and

stage-line proprietors and employees are banded together to make life a burden to all that are unfortunate enough to be thrown into their power. This was my opinion after my first round, and it remains the same now, after having tackled stage lines from Montana to California. Those who wish to return to the old days of the stage-coach can do so. I'll stay behind with my feet perched on the rest in the barber shop of some transcontinental limited train, with a cooling drink within reaching distance.

The trip back to Wells was a terror. By some mistake, we understood that we should get breakfast at the first station out, so started without even a cup of coffee. There was a fine, cold snow falling, which increased in volume, and by daylight we were in the midst of a blizzard. Our only fellow-passenger was a drunken miner, but I had cause later to thank my stars that he happened to be along.

The first station turned out to be a shack where they kept a change of horses and a stock-tender. We suggested that breakfast was about the proper thing.

"Breakfast h—l," growled the man in charge of the relay station. "The next meal is dinner, an' you'll git it about eleven if you have luck."

To add to our discomfort, we had nothing to protect ourselves against the chilling snow, which before long was an inch or two deep in the bottom of the stage. It was here that the drunken miner was transformed into a good Samaritan, owing largely to the motion of the stage. He became as a landlubber on his first voyage and it sobered him. He then remembered he was cold and "dug up" his roll of blankets, which were on the rack behind. When he opened them up he discovered that some kind friend had put in a cold lunch and a bottle of whiskey. He shared the blankets with us, gave us his lunch—he was still too ill to care for food,—and proceeded to "catch up" on the new whiskey. I think this was the first time I ever drank raw whiskey from the neck of a bottle, but I was so near frozen that kerosene oil would have been acceptable. I have always felt that that man saved our lives, for we did not reach "dinner" until late that afternoon.

By this time Rand and I began to think that cattle buying was not the picnic we had expected it to be. We had been out a month and had spent quite a lot of money without buying a hoof.

Oregon and Washington Territory beckoned

us on. We had a choice of two routes to get to Walla-Walla, our objective point. The quickest was by stage from a town called Kelton, in Utah, on the railroad opposite the head of Great Salt Lake. The road followed the south bank of Snake River and touched at Baker City, then crossed the Blue Mountains to Walla-Walla. The distance was about 550 miles and it took six days and six nights to make it.

Both Rand and I were averse to stage-coaches, at any rate after our late experience, and the prospect of being jounced for that number of days and nights consequently had its terrors.

It did not take much argument to prove to our satisfaction that owing to the high tariff on stage routes, etc., it really was cheaper to go to San Francisco and take the steamer up the coast to Portland, Oregon, and then on up the Columbia to Wallula, which was the "seaport" for Walla-Walla. Once more we boarded the overland at Wells, as usual in the middle of the night.



CHAPTER III

OFF TO OREGON

MY ideas of California were vague, and the subject of climate never entered my head. For this reason the sudden and unexpected leap from midwinter to midsummer made a lasting impression.

The overland time-table then decreed that, if the engineer and conductor had no previous engagements with washouts or snow-drifts, the trains would cross the mountains during the night. We took supper at Wadsworth, in Nevada, and had the usual vacation for exercise, which varied as to length in those days anywhere from half an hour to three weeks, according to the season of the year and condition of the weather. I remember on this occasion it was a cold, snowy evening, and the sagebrush plains looked about as desolate as a pile of empty tomato cans.

We pulled out about seven o'clock, and in

due time went to bed regretting that we should not see the forty miles of snow-sheds through which the train passed while crossing the Sierras. Although we did not see them we smelt them, as the sulphurous gas from the soft coal filled the car every time the door was opened by the trainmen (there were no vestibuled cars then). We had two locomotives puffing uphill, and one can imagine what a real taste we had of a hereafter reserved for others.

The early part of the night I spent with most of the other passengers trying to keep my lungs in place, but when we struck the down grade our troubles ceased and we slept. I awoke with a sensation of being in hot water, and with the sulphurous smell still in the air. My first idea was that things had gone wrong and I had "landed." In my excitement I raised the curtain of my window, and to my surprise saw a country blossoming with fruit trees and flowers. In a few minutes we stopped at a station, and I noticed a number of young women on the platform dressed in their summer gowns. My impulse was to get out right there and camp. To my petticoat-starved eyes these young women were more beautiful than the houris of the Mohammedan paradise.

But the train pulled out, and that evening

we arrived at Oakland mole and San Francisco. The Central Pacific then ran down from Sacramento by Stockton and Niles, the short cut to Benicia and Port Costa not having been built at the time. Our stay in San Francisco lasted only a little over twenty-four hours, as our steamer sailed the morning of the second day. We went aboard the *City of Chester* bound for Portland, Oregon, via Astoria. It took five days to go from San Francisco to Astoria under ordinary circumstances. We took six.

I enjoyed it all, and in writing of this trip I must make an attempt to describe the "travelling man" as he was then on the Pacific Coast. As far as my experience had gone, these nine or ten San Francisco drummers were the toughest (physically speaking), cheeriest, hardest-working representatives of commerce that I ever saw. We met continually during the two or three months we spent in Oregon and Washington Territory, in all sorts of places and under all conditions of discomfort, both as regards weather and living, but I always found them the same,—working like beavers during the day, sitting up to all hours of the night if any music could be had, off again at daylight in any old stage or trap bound for the next town,

sleeping in grocery stores or barrooms when the hotels were full, living on crackers and cheese if nothing else was to be had, and always cheery, cheery, cheery.

They would discuss anything from theology to cookery, and change their beliefs and ideas with every new town. I have never seen any of them since, but have often wondered if they died or got rich; I don't think there was any middle course.

We arrived off the Columbia River in the middle of the night, and had to lie to and wait for daylight in order to cross the bar. The wind was blowing about half a gale from the northwest, and the sea was very high and choppy. I went on deck about daybreak, and the first thing I saw was a sailor lashed to the rail on either side of the stern, ready, with a tackle bent to the tiller, to catch her in case the wheel ropes parted. We got in, however, without mishap, and tied up to the dock at Astoria about eight o'clock. We remained several hours unloading sheet tin for salmon cans. The first officer informed me that tin was a "grand thing" to make a ship roll.

Astoria, I thought, was a good place to get away from. It was built on piles, and a native told me that they had had fifty odd days of

rain consecutively. Everything looked par-boiled, especially the hands of the stevedores on the dock. Altogether, my recollection of the place is dismal.

We arrived in Portland early in the morning and went to a hotel, which I think was called the Occidental. The city then extended along the bank of the Willamette River for possibly a mile, and back about six or eight blocks. The busiest street was Second Street, and most of the large wholesale stores were toward the southern end of the street.

It seemed rather odd to hear the chirp of the tree-toads even above the rumble of the heavy drays. I noticed also that all the shingled roofs were covered with moss. I discovered that these conditions hold throughout the Webfoot Country on account of the moist climate. Our stay here was short.

We made arrangements with the banking house of Ladd & Tilton to do our business, and the next day embarked on what seemed to me to be quite a large stern-wheel steamer, which went up the Columbia River as far as the Cascades.

I believe this is the finest river scenery in the United States. There may be some of more grandeur, but I have never seen it. The

width of the river as it sweeps down between terraced palisades on both banks, rising almost sheer to a height in some places of two thousand feet, the luxuriance of the vegetation, and the glimpses one gets of mountain streams brawling down the face of the cliffs, or else taking a complete fall of six hundred or a thousand feet, make a panorama of enchanting beauty.

We reached the Cascades in the afternoon, and were put aboard a little railroad train (narrow gauge) which carried us to the upper side of the falls. I remember there was a blockhouse pointed out which was said to have been built by General Sherman just after the Civil War. This railroad, which could not have been more than three miles long, as I remember, was on the Oregon side of the river. It was the only one in that State at that time. Above the Cascades we took another steamer of the same type as the first, but smaller. We continued to a town called "The Dalles." I never found out what The Dalles really meant. It is a French name, evidently, and no doubt just means The Dalles. At all events, you don't see them often. The Columbia River is turned on edge and flows through an opening in the solid rock, barely more than a

hundred and fifty yards wide and perhaps a quarter of a mile long. The river narrows down to this from a width of three quarters of a mile immediately above, so one can imagine the rush of water. Niagara Falls, of course, is a much fancier piece of property, but when it comes to business and real push give me The Dalles.

We transferred again and took another boat. By this time we had left the mountains of the Cascade range behind us and were getting to the low, sandy plains through which the Columbia River flows for hundreds of miles, beginning near the British Columbia line. It was about here that we first saw old Mt. Hood, rising as if alone from the plains, cone-shaped and snow-capped. It was several months before I finally lost sight of it for good and all, and in those months I learned a good deal that I never could have learned at Sunday-school.

Our boat stopped every now and then and ran its nose up on the bank to unload some freight, and it was not until I had ridden over the same country on a horse that I cleared up the puzzle as to whom that freight was for. At that time I saw nothing in the shape of a house, to say nothing of a settlement, and the only objects alive were some Indians squatting

about or sitting on their ponies, with their all-seeing look of indifference. The boxes and bundles were tumbled out on the sand and we would steam merrily on our way, leaving the Indians still squatting and indifferent.

The indifference of the Indians is explained by the fact that they and the settler had had one or two heated arguments as to whom things in general belonged to the year previous, which culminated in the Nez Perces War of 1877, in which the Indians came out second-best. At the time of which I write, it was considered etiquette on their part to leave things alone until called for by the freighters, who hauled them inland to their destination.

The lack of any sign of habitation was accounted for because the ranches were located on the hay bottoms of the creeks and were hidden by the high intervening sand-hills.

These plains on both sides of the river were grazing grounds for thousands of cattle. A man by the name of Ben Snipes, who lived at The Dalles, was reputed to have twenty or thirty thousand head that ranged on the north, or Yakima, side. There is no doubt that he had fully this many as he sold parts of the herd for years to Eastern buyers.

We arrived at Wallula about dusk and left

early in the forenoon of the next day. Some eighteen years afterwards I found myself on the outskirts of the Sahara desert, and my first view of that historic waste reminded me of Wallula and its surroundings as it was then, sand in all directions. I have never been there since, and if it has grown into a large and prosperous town I hope the inhabitants will pardon me.

There was a hotel built of logs, but I remember particularly the board lean-to, which evidently had only lately been added, as the new, rough planking was the only thing that was not the color of sand. This addition contained the bar and quite a large amount of floor space, which later on was used as a dormitory by the overflow from the hotel. Those who were fortunate enough to have blankets spread them wherever they could find room and made a bluff at getting some sleep. Those who had none, "bellied up" to the bar until it was a matter of indifference to them whether they had blankets, or only a flannel shirt and confidence in their ability to stand.

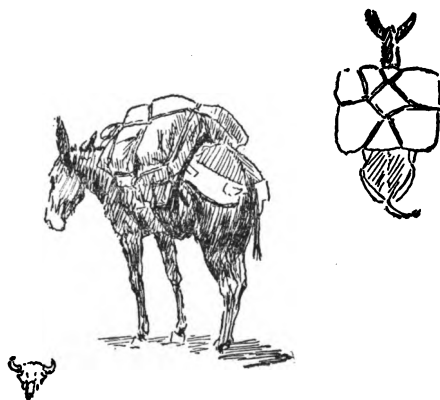
I had my "bed" and finally sank into a sound slumber, lulled by the strains of *Suwanee River* sung by an inebriated chorus. It was

a strange evening, and it made a lasting impression, especially as this was my first experience with the rougher side of frontier life. I don't think that at that time I had ever been in the same room with men brutally drunk, and I must admit they scared me. Before I lost consciousness there had been one or two fights, and judging from the looks of the company next morning, there must have been more. Subsequent experience taught me that it took very little of the "red eye" then dispensed over the bars in that country to make a man try to fight with the picture of his best girl.

I got up early, as the atmosphere was weighty with the fumes of stale beer and bad tobacco, and took a stroll outside. I then discovered that, in addition to the hotel, there were a store, another barroom, and some buildings, evidently belonging to the railroad.

Perhaps the description of the hotel fare of the period in that part of the country may be of interest. Everything was fried, of course, and there was no stint in the quantity. Beef, potatoes, coffee (so-called) or tea (terracotta), baking-powder biscuits, and always salmon. I got such a dose of salmon during my stay in Oregon that it took ten years and a good

constitution to get the taste out of my mouth. Strange to say, in a country where there were thousands of sheep, mutton was not looked upon with favor as an article of food. I have heard some of the old-timers say that they would as soon eat mule as sheep meat. However, it was served in hotels. When one got into the farming districts, eggs, chickens, and vegetables were plentiful, as was also fruit, especially in the Walla-Walla valley.



CHAPTER IV

OUR TROUBLES BEGIN

EVERYTHING was ready finally, and we were all on the train bound for Walla-Walla. Those who were comatose or semi-comatose, owing to the red-eye treatment of the night before, were loaded with the freight. The track was narrow gauge, and the train consisted of two flat cars and two or three box cars. One box car had planks across to sit on, and was occupied mostly by the women travellers.

We were hardly under way when the inevitable mouth organ appeared, and at intervals we had music during the journey. The distance was about thirty miles, and we were over three hours making it. We passed through no towns, but kept stopping every mile or two to drop off various packages.

The conductor of that train was one of the most accommodating men I ever met. After

we had been out about an hour, one of the women who had a child with her expressed a wish for a drink of water. The train was stopped and he alighted with a bucket and started down the track. In about three seconds, every man with "hot coppers," that could walk, was following in his wake. They were gone about half an hour, and when they straggled back they looked like some scouting party returning from a severe engagement. Most of them had handkerchiefs tied about their heads. I learned that about a quarter of a mile away from the railroad there was an exceptionally fine spring of cold water, and cold water was what they needed.

Everybody cheered up after that and we eventually arrived at Walla-Walla.

This railroad was then owned by Baker & Boyer, bankers at Walla-Walla, and had recently been equipped with iron rails; before that time the track had been of wooden joists laid with strap iron. It must have been a mint to the owners, as a large portion of the wheat that was raised in the Walla-Walla valley and the foothills of the Blue Mountains was shipped over this road to the river at Wallula and thence to the seaboard by steamer. I don't know what the

freight rates were, but I know that farmers were talking of dollar wheat, and I imagine they needed it, especially as most of the shippers in that section had mortgaged their crops to Baker & Boyer to start with.

I have seen the time when the Union Pacific R. R. was lord of creation, and "uncle" Collis Huntington had things his own way, at least in California, but for a rock-bound monopoly I think that corporation beat them all. They not only owned the only railroad in the country, but they owned the only bank, and, incidentally, most of the inhabitants. Walla-Walla at that time was the metropolis of Washington Territory and eastern Oregon, and contained from 2000 to 2500 people. There was a main business street several blocks long. The largest store was Schwabacker's. This firm dealt in everything from hairpins to anvils, and had branches in almost every village throughout eastern Oregon. They were Hebrews, of course, as were the majority of large storekeepers then, as now, in the Northwest.

The farmers were cattle- and horse-poor throughout Union, Wasco, and Umatilla counties, and also across the Columbia River in Yakima and Klikitat counties. This con-

dition was brought about from the following causes: When the first immigrants into Oregon crossed the plains in '41 and later, they brought with them stock of some kind, either horse or horned. As years went on, the progeny of these animals rolled up in numbers so rapidly that the amount necessary for the home market was but a small percentage of the annual increase. The ranges and water were all free, the climate moderate, and the feed unsurpassed. Who has not heard of Oregon bunch grass? Under these circumstances all stock thrived.

There was practically no outlet for the surplus except in the Portland market, and that was of little use to the people in eastern Oregon on account of the distance and freight charges. It does not seem to have struck the native that he might find a market if he drove to a railroad. In fact, I imagine few of them knew that there was a railroad across the continent, and if they did, the expense and risk of driving put it entirely out of their figuring. A year or two, perhaps longer, before I arrived, some of the more progressive residents had turned their attention to sheep, as they found they could get some return from the sale of wool, even if there was no sale for

mutton. The wool was hauled to the river or the railroad and shipped to San Francisco via Portland, although I believe there were then several woollen mills in the web-foot or western section of the State. The sheepmen then were financially on top, and a very bitter feeling was shown between them and the cattle-raisers. As usual, the cowmen looked down on the sheep-herder, and claimed the ranges were being fed off, etc., but as the sheep-raisers had more money to spend for drinks, they seemed to have the better of the argument.

I have no way of knowing the number of cattle then ranging in eastern Oregon and Washington, but judging from the thousands that were driven east between 1877 and 1883, it must have been half a million if not more. Prices had begun to rise even when we first began to buy, but the following list of values was accepted that year: Cows with calf by their side, \$9.00 to \$10.00; yearlings, \$5.00 to \$7.00; two-year-olds, \$8.00 to \$10.00; and three-year-olds and up, \$14.00 to \$16.00. The price of sheep ranged from \$1.00 to \$1.50 according to age and size. These prices rose steadily as the number of droves increased. In 1882 we gave it up, as the margin of profit

had decreased to such an extent that it was not worth the risk.

The farmer in Oregon therefore depended for cash really upon the sale of his wheat or wool. The only thing that was accepted as money was gold coin, and, to a limited extent, silver. Although in that year greenbacks were at par, and silver at a discount in the Eastern States, you could not persuade a farmer to touch anything but coin. Here is an example :

On one of my cattle-buying trips, in crossing a stream my horse mired in a quicksand and so wrenched his back in his struggles to get out as to render him useless. I led him to the nearest ranch, some four or six miles distant, and after several hours' talk I persuaded the ranchman to take a fifty-dollar greenback and my crippled horse in trade for one which, under other circumstances and with gold, I could have bought for \$20.00 at the outside. He was not trying to gouge me, and I really think that when I rode off he was morally sure he was one horse out, as the greenback conveyed no idea of value to him.

As I have said, there were no banks except the one in Walla-Walla, and so the general stores attended to the financial needs of the ranchman. Checks or drafts were so much waste

paper, and all transactions were on the basis of either absolute credit or else coin. I am speaking of course from the standpoint of strangers.

It seems easy in these days of express companies to transport coin, but no one who has not tried it can conceive of the physical discomfort entailed in carrying silver or gold dollars in any amount on horseback. I am not alluding to the danger of being robbed, but to the fatigue. A bag of dollars seems to have teeth. If you tie it on your saddle, it is sure to injure the horse's back ; if you carry it slung on your person, no matter in what fashion, you experience the sensation of having a hole bored in you.

The immigration into Oregon and Washington that year was very heavy. I heard it estimated as high as 40,000 and we could see evidence of new arrivals continually. Scarcely a week passed without our meeting an immigrant train of several wagons, hunting locations. Most of them seemed to come from Missouri or Arkansas. It was quite the ordinary thing to see a family camped in their wagon box on their claim, while the male portion were ploughing the land in order to get their crops seeded in before it was too late. The system seemed

to be first to plough the land and sow it, then build the fences and shelter for the stock, and finally, if time and money held out, a home to live in. Otherwise the wagon box was taken from the hounds and banked in with sod, with a lean-to of brush for a kitchen, and this seemed all that was necessary to make things comfortable for the winter.

There were thousands of acres of the finest wheat land in the world lying open to settlement. This was virgin soil. Except along the rivers and creeks there were few fences or signs of habitation. I am told that to-day the larger portion of the counties of Union, Wasco, and Umatilla are so fenced up and farmed that it would be impossible to drive even a small band of cattle through the country. This may all be very uninteresting, but the changes have been so tremendous that many will find it hard to believe that these conditions existed only one generation ago.

Rand and I had everything to learn, but at the same time it was necessary to give, or try to give, the impression that we knew it all.

A friend in need turned up in the person of a man named Matt Ryan. The firm of Ryan & Lang had driven cattle for years from Texas to the Eastern markets, and young Ryan had

grown up in the business. Besides that he and his partner had driven the pioneer herd from Oregon to Wyoming the year before, and of course he knew the ground. I shall always remember the kindness he showed us and the assistance he gave us when we really needed it. The first thing we had to do was to find out where to go to buy cattle, then how to get there, and what to do when we did get there.

To ride off a hundred miles or two in a strange country and bring up in the place you start for, is not always easy. It was decided that Rand should go in one direction and I in another and make a preliminary scout.

As the first step, each bought a horse to ride and one to "pack"—that is, to carry our blankets and also serve as a spare horse. I spent two days learning how to make a "squaw hitch," which is a certain way of manipulating a rope so that it will hold one's belongings on the top side of an animal. Let me explain that the "squaw hitch" is only a makeshift and is never used by regular "packers." They "throw" the "diamond hitch," and when it is done by an earnest-minded member of a government mule train you can bet the trigger of your gun that when that mule has bucked

his soul into eternity and lies down to rest that pack will be exactly where it was put originally.

On the third day I said good-by to the crowd in front of the hotel at Walla-Walla and started for Pendleton, a town about forty-five miles southwest. I can assure you that I felt I was "it" about that time. At last I had realized my dream—everything was there, six-shooter and belt, McCarty (or hair rope), sombrero, etc., all except a rifle, and everything was *very new*.

My spurs were really curiosities. I bought them from a young rancher I met at the livery stable. The crotch and shank were of brass, and the rowel was about three inches in diameter and was made from the steel blade of an ordinary hand-saw. On the outside of each spur attached to the pinions were two jangles which struck the rowel at every movement of my feet, and I therefore sounded like a string of sleighbells. This style of spur was indigenous to Oregon. I never saw anything like them elsewhere. Mine, I regret to say, were stolen later on. My saddle-horse was a chunky-built red roan, and I named him Robin.

The road to Pendleton was easy to find. I had only to stick to the main travelled high-

way. The only things bothering me were the pack-horse and the "squaw hitch." While *en route* I stopped with the idea of putting the load on more securely, and untied the pack. I then discovered that I had forgotten how to tie that blessed hitch. I wrestled physically and in spirit with that pack and the pack-horse for fully twenty miles. As a destroyer of mental happiness, a pack that insists upon slipping under the belly of the horse is only to be compared to a collar button that won't connect with the button-hole.

It was about two o'clock in the afternoon when I pulled up at the hotel in a place called Weston, and I was hungry. The only person in sight was a man scrubbing out the dining-room. He mutteringly agreed to give me something to eat, although it was after the dinner hour. At that time and place, embossed and painted bills of fare were not fashionable, but instead the "hash-slinger" (if a gentleman) or "biscuit-shooter" (if a lady) repeated a list of the grub as piled, and the guest generally selected the whole pile.

My friend brought me some soup which I ate greedily. He then began stammeringly to call the bill of fare, "B-b-bo-bo-boiled beef."

I stood pat.

Again he began, "B-b-bo-bo-boiled beef." But this time he seemed a little cross.

I said nothing in order to avoid embarrassing him and waited for him to continue the list. But he stopped, and did n't even stutter.

"Well, go on," I said encouragingly.

"D-d-d-damn it, that's all there is," he sputtered.

I took boiled beef.

Next morning I started out for Pendleton leaving my blankets and pack-horse to be picked up later on. Rather than imperil my chances of salvation by using language which that horse could understand I decided to run the risk of freezing to death.



CHAPTER V

BUYING HORSES FROM POOR LO

THE town of Pendleton was just on the border of the Umatilla reservation, and here I saw the noble red man on his native heath—blankets, beads, paint, and all. Indians were then, and always have been to me, objects of interest and amusement—and, at times, of what brave people call uneasiness, and I call downright scariness.

An incident that happened a few weeks later on this same reservation goes to show that the "Siwash" is not as ingenuous and down-trodden as he is described by some very nice gentlemen and old maiden ladies who live in parts of the Eastern States, and who have had interviews with various well-informed Indians that frequent the station platforms on the trans-continental railway lines.

We needed saddle-horses for the trail, and had been advised to buy them from the Indians,

as they had horses suited for our purpose and a large number of them. However, it was important first to get permission from the agent to trade with them, otherwise the title to the horse or horses might at any time be questioned, and in the following manner:

I buy a horse from an Indian, either on or off the reservation, in good faith—that is, if I am new at the business.

I put my saddle on him and ride gaily for perhaps thirty or forty miles, when I meet, as by chance, a red gentleman who looks sharply at my horse and then follows me in a nonchalant way to my destination. He then appears with either a white man or a half-breed who speaks English, and I am told that the horse is his and has been stolen from him. He proves this by his brand. I am out my money and my horse. The money is divided on some well-understood basis between the Indian and white man, or capper, and all I get out of the transaction is an insight into the truthful and honorable character of "poor Lo."

A guarantee from the agent goes as to titles, as he is the court of last resort where they are concerned.

I called, therefore, on Agent, or rather Colonel, Pennoyer of the Umatilla tribe, and ex-

plained what I wanted. He was very civil and volunteered to send messages to horse owners, instructing them to bring those they wished to sell to a large corral on the Umatilla River, about fifteen miles from Pendleton, in a week's time.

Before the day arrived, I had hired a very decent man, a native-born Oregonian named "Pres." Nail, to go with me as guide and interpreter. He spoke the Chinook lingo fluently, which was understood by almost all the Oregon and Washington tribes and spoken by a good many of them. It is the language invented by the Hudson Bay people years ago, and is a compound of Latin, French, Indian, and phonetics. I became quite proficient later with a little practice, and even to-day can remember some sentences and their meanings. For instance :

1	2	3	4	5	6
"Concha chicamen mika tika okook cuetan?"					

means

1	2	3	4	5	6
"How much money you take that cayuse?"					

Concha (Latin, quantus), chicamen (phonetic sound of dollars clinked together), mika (probably Indian), tika (English, take), okook and cuetan (Indian).

Also, "Ka mika klatawa?" "How far off?" or "How far must I ride?" Here klatawa is phonetic, and describes the sound of horses' hoofs when galloping.

Upon the advice of "Pres." Nail, I purchased two poor, scrawny little plugs in Pendleton to take us to the rendezvous. I think I paid six dollars apiece for them, and when they were saddled with the big California rigs they looked more like "thirty cents."

We arrived at the corral about eight o'clock in the morning. Not an Indian or horse in sight. We dismounted, and as the sun became warm I dozed—a thing that comes natural to a cowboy when not actively employed. I was awakened by the sound of a horse's hoofs, and looking up I saw approaching, astride of a miserable little pony even worse than ours, without saddle or bridle, with just a piece of rope around the under lip to guide with, a warrior bold—and about as handsome a specimen as I have ever seen. His blanket and leggings were white, with gay-colored stripes and figures; his moccasins were a mass of beads. Around his head was a band of fur standing out like the rim of a hat, the top of his head making the crown. His face was painted.

When he came to where we were he pulled up suddenly, as if he had received the greatest surprise of his life, got off his pony and walked directly up to our horses and began to examine them closely.

"Concha?" ("How much?") he asked in Chinook, pointing to the better animal, which was mine. He also indicated by signs that he wanted my fine California saddle and bridle.

In the innocence of my heart I was about to suggest \$60, which would have represented a conservative profit on the outfit. But Nail was before me.

"Thirty dollars," he replied in Chinook.

I had paid \$45 for my saddle alone only a few weeks before, and my pony had cost \$6. I felt utterly disgusted. However, I felt that something was up, and "held my hush."

The warrior fumbled with his money pouch for a minute, took another look at the horse, shook his head and grunted in negative fashion. Then he leaped on his "whittledig" and disappeared up the road.

"What in the name of heaven do you mean by trying to put me afoot for \$30, when this outfit is worth twice that?" I cried to Nail.

My guide, philosopher, and friend took out

his tobacco bag and rolled a cigarette, eying me all the while with a smile of compassion.

"Young feller," he said, "when you've bought as many hosses from Injuns as I have you won't git so brash the fust time they try a little shindy on you. But I put the kibosh on that buck's game—*kumtucks?*" (understand?)

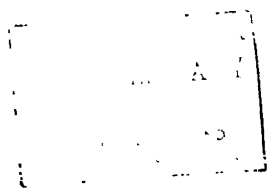
In the course of an hour I heard a rumbling noise, but as the banks rose abruptly from the river I could not see any distance. While trying to make out the cause I saw a horse's head appear on the sky-line, and then an avalanche of them came tearing down that bank. On the right flank, mounted on a superb pinto stallion, was our warrior in the white blanket.

Nail then explained that the purpose of the Indian's first visit was to find out what value we put on horse-flesh. A practically new saddle and a horse for \$30 made even that "Siwash" think, and I believe it must have brought the horse-market down at least \$15 per. I know we bought some twenty or thirty head of fine animals at that time for an average price of \$16.

The band of horses which was driven in numbered probably five hundred head and was made up of all classes—young stallions and



TESTING THE HORSE MARKET



mares with suckling colts, yearlings and others. In fact, it was a round-up, and after we made our purchases they started in to mark, brand, and alter the young stock.

I then had an opportunity to witness a performance which shows the inborn cruelty and love of gore of the red man, even the most peaceable. I do not blame them, as cruelty is a racial trait, but I often wonder how people expect to change an Indian into a white man by a three years' training at Hampton or some other similar institution. My understanding is that it has taken three thousand years to bring the average United States Senator or Congressman to his present state of perfect intelligence and purity, and therefore the red men must have just 2997 more years of intelligence and purity before they can accomplish their transformation.

They first built a large fire in the middle of the corral and then every buck got out of his blanket. As the work progressed and they warmed up, other articles, such as shirts and loose articles of ornament, were shed. Their leggings in most cases were left on, for the simple reason that they were sewn on for keeps, but I noticed two or three of them stripped to the skin with the exception of the

breech-clout. Three or four did the roping, and the rest helped to brand or tend the fire, while two did the castrating and ear-marking.

The corral was probably 400 or 500 x 150 feet, oblong in shape, and very stoutly built of logs and poles. You can perhaps imagine the scene: Four or five hundred horses mad with fear rushing around and around this enclosure, the dust rising in clouds, the yells of the Indians and their helpers as they threw a victim mingling with the neighs of the terror-stricken mares that had lost their foals, the stallions showing their resentment at this treatment by fighting each other; the glint of the bodies of the ropers, as they rushed about swinging their lariats, gleaming in the sun with sweat and the blood from the poor brutes they had mutilated.

It was a picture full of action, but far from refining. The most harrowing thing to me was to see the poor little colts, perhaps not more than three or four months old, running about on three legs, the fourth having been broken like a pipe-stem. If opportunity presented, they would be dodged through the gate onto the prairie and there left until they died from hunger and thirst. It is against the Indian religion to kill a horse. When they got

through with that day's work, I saw several dead in the corral and five with broken legs outside. I had the satisfaction of shooting two, and hope some one put the others out of their misery.

Among the young horses that were altered, there was a certain percentage too scrubby for any self-respecting buck to ride, and these were marked for squaw- or pack-horses. After branding them, they would split their ears and then cut off all the mane and tail to make their ropes with. Then, if they happened to be white or yellow in color they would be smeared from head to tail with the blood that came from their various lacerations. All of these operations were accompanied by violent fits of laughter.

I also noticed that one of the veterinary surgeons, whenever a particularly fine-looking animal came under his knife, would take a handful of its blood and rub it on his chest and stomach.

What percentage of the animals died I don't know, but it must have been large. The work is done with ordinary butcher knives, and the only preventive against hemorrhage was a handful of dry, pulverized manure grabbed at random from the floor of the corral.

I decided to drive our horses directly across country to Walla-Walla, and thereby save about twenty miles. It was getting late when we started, but Nail knew of a corral owned by the old chief of the tribe, whose name sounded like Howlis Wamp Ho, on McKay Creek, about ten miles on our road, where we could put the horses overnight. He said nothing about anything to eat or a place to sleep, but I did not care to seem tender, and made no objection.

Barring a cold lunch which we had brought from town, I had had nothing since about 5 : 30 that morning, and I tell you it looked a long way to the next grub pile.

Among other accomplishments, I had acquired that of chewing tobacco, and I found it a very good thing wherewith to dull the gnawing of hunger. We reached the corral of Howlis Wamp Ho about dusk, and drove our horses in. Nail then noticed some tepees about a quarter of a mile up the stream, and suggested trying for food and lodging. We found that chief Howlis Wamp Ho was there. Nail knew the old man well. We were asked to get down, and in short order had our horses picketed and were all ready for food. Nail warned me not leave anything small—such as a

knife or pipe or handkerchief—about if I cared to see it again. Our red friends had a trick of squatting over any stray article, with the skirts of the blankets covering it. When they got up, the story was told. The “vanishing lady” had always reminded me of this act.

For supper we had bread, meat, and coffee. I have eaten worse in farmhouses in Nebraska. I'll admit that the bread was a bit gritty in places, but it was satisfying to a youngster that had starved for twelve hours. We slept in a tepee and had a buffalo robe under and over us. The prevailing smell was of buckskin—any one who has ever smelt an Indian moccasin knows the odor. It is not unpleasant. Two bucks, an old squaw, and a young one also occupied the tepee. What the family relationship was I don't know. Their treatment was distinctly hospitable, although, as I afterwards learned, they had a lively appreciation of favors to come.

In the morning we had breakfast at about sun-up—same menu. I presented the old chief with a battered meerschaum pipe with an amber mouthpiece. The amber caught him, and I have no doubt was soon made into beads and was probably buried with him when he died. A red silk neck-handkerchief, some tobacco,

and a few dollars in silver paid the bill for our food and lodging, the use of the corral, and the service of about ten young bucks to assist us in getting our horses well strung out on the road.

To get a bunch of strange horses, especially Indian cayuses, started in the right direction when they are hungry and thirsty and know they are being driven from their usual haunts, is an undertaking that would start the beads of perspiration on Napoleon's brow. I always felt that that pipe and handkerchief paid for a good day's work.

To the automobilist, I would explain, that each one of the horses in that corral was ready to run in a different direction with the idea in his head that he was a stake horse beating the record. When the bars were let down, the horses made a dash for liberty. The Indians meantime had taken off their blankets and sat on their horses directly opposite the exit, about one hundred yards distant, whirling the blankets around their heads. As soon as the leaders were well out, the bucks began a circle about them, edging away gradually from the corral.

After the ponies had run round in a circle at top speed for perhaps five minutes, kept in

a bunch by the sight of the waving blankets, they gradually came to a stand. Then three Indians started ahead in the direction we wanted to go and the rest of us brought up the rear and flanks. This formation continued for a few miles, until we came to water. After the horses had satisfied their thirst, we let them browse for a while and then started them on. The Indians left us and we had no more trouble on that trip.

A couple of months later, when the war broke out, these Umatilla Indians fought with the whites and did some splendid work.



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CHAPTER VI

MORE TRIBULATIONS

THE manner of buying or contracting to buy cattle, which held at that time, would have given the average Eastern business man an attack of nervous prostration. My experience in company with Balch, one of the other partners, who had recently come up from Laramie, while travelling through Umatilla, Union, and Wasco counties to gather up a herd, will give some idea of the conditions. It must be borne in mind that neither bank-notes nor checks were of any value; to do business it was either put up gold or silver or else "jawbone."

When we arrived in any particular section where cattle were to be had, the first thing was to find the man that owned the most cattle, and make a contract with him. Then the smaller owners, whose stock ranged with his, nearly always would fall into line. This cattle-

king had to be diplomatically handled and his friendship won, otherwise time was wasted.

I have seen Balch, who was over six feet and as ignorant of a nurse-maid's duties as possible, walk up and down the floor of a small cabin dandling a squalling baby in order to make friends with the wife of an influential native, thereby winning the husband and incidentally giving the woman a chance to cook us some supper.

I remember on one occasion when he tried his blandishments on the baby in order to win its father. That infant must have eaten green apples, for its colicky wails were deafening and incessant. I could stand it no longer.

"Excuse me, Balch," I said, "but I think I'll go out and look after the horses."

"For God's sake, don't leave me alone!" he cried. "I believe this damned thing is going to have a fit."

We could find out approximately how many head of the different classes they thought they could gather and deliver at a certain specified place and time, and then we would pay down either a dollar or two dollars a head, according to the circumstances, in order to bind the bargain. We usually figured on two thirds of the estimated number being delivered. We would

then mutually sign a paper, and that was all we had to show for the money advanced. On the other hand, if the ranchers went to all the trouble and expense to gather and deliver their stock at the rendezvous (which was sometimes at a distance of fifty or sixty miles from their range), and we were not there to receive them or had not the money to pay for them, then they would be the sufferers. I think we had the long end, because, as a rule, the farmers of any standing generally took our assurances and a letter from our bankers as sufficient security. Of course there generally would be five or six fellows who wanted to see the color of our money, and as they almost always had the finest cattle, we had to come to time.

Between us we would carry about \$2000 in gold and silver, and as our stock ran out we were obliged to ride to the nearest stage line and have more shipped by express from Walla-Walla.

At that time there was an epidemic of diphtheria throughout that whole section. It attacked very young and half-grown children in most cases, although there had been several deaths among adults. As we were living on the country, we stopped wherever hunger or night overtook us, provided there was any

habitation in sight. We were quite often warned off on account of sickness in the ranch.

One day we started early, expecting a long ride across a low spur of the Blue Mountains. It began to rain and we lost the trail, but as that was an everyday occurrence we kept on in the general direction. The storm grew worse, and finally my horse got mired and broke himself down over the kidneys, and there we were. I got off and led him. Somewhere about five in the afternoon we found a wagon road, and I suggested to Balch that he ride ahead and see where we were and what show there was for a night's rest.

I kept plodding along slowly, and finally it got plumb dark. I was soaked and hungry, but luckily had some chewing tobacco. It was useless to try to light a fire as everything was drenched, and I had about made up my mind that it was an all-night job, when I heard old Balch yelling. I answered and pretty soon he appeared, or rather did not appear, except as to his voice and the quash of his horse's feet in the mud. He had found a shack about two miles away, off the road, and he thought he could find it again.

That was the longest two miles I ever

walked. We found the cabin somewhere near morning, it seemed to me. After some talk, a boy eighteen years old let us in. He had lit a candle, and by its light I saw we were in a one-roomed cabin, about twenty-five feet square, with a fireplace at one end and some bunks at the other, curtained off with calico like a sleeping-car. There were also a cook-stove, table, dresser, chairs, and a cradle—empty. Everything looked clean and the cabin evidently had only just been built. I saw by the clock it was about nine o'clock. He explained that the barn was not built, but we could tie our horses under the lee of a haystack.

We unsaddled and returned to find that the boy had started the fire and was preparing some coffee and food. I was about done up. While we were eating, he told us that the baby and a young brother had died the day before, that his sister was just recovering (she was in one of the bunks), and that his father and mother had gone to the nearest settlement with the bodies of the children to bury them.

Balch and I slept on the floor in front of the fire. I can truthfully say that rather than have slept out-of-doors that night I should have taken chances of getting the bubonic plague. Most of the ranchers buried their dead on some

knoll near the house, protecting the grave from the coyotes or wolves by heaping stones on it, and if they could get a carpenter they would place a frame with high palings on top. Almost every ranch we passed had one or more of these sad signs.

Another experience a few days later was, I thought, amusing. We brought up at a ranch about nightfall, and were told that although they would give us something to eat they could not take us in, as they had some women visitors. We were shown the barn, however, and on investigation found a loft full of hay. That was too good for us. So immediately after supper we turned in, using our saddle blankets for a covering. Our schedule time for getting to sleep after stretching out was usually about one second, and this was no exception. I woke up in the middle of the night with terrible pains in my back and side and could get no relief no matter how I turned. I could hear Balch thrashing about in the same way.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"I've got some awful pains in my back and side," he answered.

"Same here," I said. "What in the world does it mean?"

"It may be we're getting diphtheria," suggested Balch.

"I believe it's rheumatism and inflammation of the kidneys," I advanced. "It must be, with that soaking we had the other day."

But nothing could keep us awake. We dozed through until daybreak, suffering torture and with all kinds of horrible dreams.

In the morning, after attending to our horses, we breakfasted, and although feeling better we were still very sore. When it came time for our departure, we climbed to the loft to get our saddle blankets and then discovered the cause of our suffering. There was a cross-beam or stringer which had been covered by about two feet of loose hay, and of course was not visible. We had lain down in such a manner that the beam was in the small of our backs, and as the weight of our bodies packed the hay, the beam came into prominence so that all night long we were virtually hanging across it with our heads and heels down.

It is claimed that a billiard table makes a fairly hard bed, but I will take it in preference—imagination cuts some figure too. I don't think either of us could have been considered hipped about our health, yet we both were dead sure that the hospital stared us in the face.

CHAPTER VII

WE LEAVE WALLA-WALLA

AFTER making contracts for all the cattle that we had money to pay for, we returned to headquarters at Walla-Walla and began preparing our outfit for the trail. It was customary for the drovers to supply everything except the men's bedding. A properly equipped outfit for driving a herd of from 2000 to 3000 head of cattle consisted of a wagon rigged for four horses, with hoops and cover, a mess box in the tail, and a water barrel on the side, with necessary camping utensils and tin dishes, etc., for from twelve to fourteen men. This number included the cook, who also acted as teamster for the mess wagon, and the horse-herder, also known as the "cavarango" or "horse-wrangler."

Each man was supplied with a saddle, bridle, saddle-blanket, and forty feet of rope. It was not the rule to hire a man who owned his horse

and saddle, as it made him independent of his employer should any difference of opinion arise. In other words, when the herd was once started and several days out, or twenty miles or more from a town or settlement, any cowboy would think twice before throwing up his job, packing his blankets on his back, and returning afoot for that distance. The longer the distance and the lonelier the country, the greater hold you had on your men. Horse-stealing was a very ticklish business in those days, and things would have to be pretty bad before recourse was had to it.

If a man wanted to quit, he was permitted to do so at the first opportunity, but hands, especially good ones, were very scarce, and we had to take some measures to prevent our being left alone with the herd on the trail.

Each man was supposed to have from seven to twelve horses in his "string." That is, each man had so many horses to do his work with, driving and herding, both by night and day. We found it an economy to have plenty of horses, both from a money standpoint and that of the wear and tear on the temper. The work at its easiest is hard, and, as the ponies rely entirely upon what they find on the prairie for

their sustenance, it takes a tough one to get through without resembling a skeleton.

There is, of course, a tremendous difference in the way men handle their mounts, and you will find one man's string in good shape, and another's gone all to pieces with the same amount of work. It all means that the latter worries and unnecessarily overworks his horses, and nine cases out of ten you will find he gives them sore backs.

I presume most of the drovers that year had the same experience with the "hired man" as we had, and it was delightful. We tried at first to hire the native cow-puncher, but none seemed willing to go the whole distance with us, and we could not make any half-way contract, as we did not know what conditions awaited us farther down the trail.

Our men, when lined up, looked more like a ship's crew, picked up along the docks of a seaport, than a cowboy outfit. There were only one or two of them that had ever been on the trail or knew what cattle-driving meant, and about half of them, at the start, could not saddle and bridle a horse properly, let alone ride one. Our outfit included an ex-soldier, a Methodist preacher, a stage-driver, two prospectors, and several 'farmers' boys, a lumber-

man, and a dry-goods clerk. They came from every State in the Union and had drifted up the coast from California, looking for some place, I presume, where they could live without work. We got rid of all but three of the men we started with, before we had been out two months, and a more worthless set of tramps never struck the prairie. The three men we kept turned out to be splendid men and worked for us for several years following. We paid our hands \$40 a month with grub. The cook got \$60, and a good one was worth it, but the only one we ever found that was worthy of the name was such a crank that we could not keep him.

We had quite a lot of amusement during the time we had been hiring hands in testing the horsemanship of the applicants for work and at the same time proving that "all men are liars." The first question we asked a man when he applied for a job was whether he could ride. Of course each and every man acknowledged the soft impeachment with different degrees of boastfulness. The unsuspecting victim was then invited, if he looked at all promising, to walk over to the stable with the ostensible purpose of picking out a saddle and bridle that he thought would suit his particular style.

In the band of horses was a small chunky, crop-eared, wall-eyed, black cayuse named Tom. When a rope was thrown on him, he would express his anger and contempt by snorting, but beyond this he appeared gentle enough. The term "gentle" is used in a comparative sense. Any horse that had been saddled, bridled, and ridden three or four times was called "gentle," to distinguish him from a green one or an outlaw. A green, or unbroken, horse is, of course, an unknown quantity. An outlaw, or spoiled horse, is one that is incorrigibly vicious, either by temperament or because he has been made so from unskilful or brutal handling when being broken.

Tom was neither an outlaw nor green. He simply objected to being disturbed, and showed it by first winning the confidence and affection of his rider and then bucking him into the middle of the following week at an opportune moment. He was somewhat like Mark Twain's mule, who was good for fourteen years just to get a chance to kick a man's head off. He would stand quietly while being saddled and walk around the enclosure in a hesitating way, as though he really was afraid that the man on his back might fall off. Naturally, the rider, if a little timid, gained

confidence, and the more his fear was relieved, the greater his air of assurance.

At about this stage of the performance, a gate leading into a back street was opened and the *caballero* was told to start him on a lope. Some accommodating spectator would lend a quirt, as none of the candidates had spurs, and then the circus began. I don't think one of all those that tried rode that horse down the lane and back properly. Some were not thrown to the ground, but their efforts to stay on the top side were even more ludicrous than the sprawling kicks of the others when landed on their backs. These trials served the purpose, however, and prevented our being bothered at all times, day and night, by men looking for a job.

We put a man named Brown in as sort of under-foreman. He turned out to be the worst of the lot. Brown could talk more and do less than any man in the outfit. He was a "variegated and inconsequential liar," as Foss, the ex-Methodist preacher, called him, and he gave us a good deal of trouble before we finally got rid of him.

I had a chance at the time to let people know that I was the easiest thing in the Territory, and I certainly did so. To make a long

story short, I was buncoed into paying a fancy price for a pair of draught-horses for our wagon, only to find that they absolutely would not "pull the hat off your head," as the ex-stage driver remarked. In my innocence and ignorance I imagined that if four average-sized horses could pull a certain load, two exceptionally large horses could do the same. In the absence of Rand, the partner with the mule ranch experience, I bought them on my own judgment, two days before the date of our proposed departure, had them shod—I found out afterwards they had corns, quarter-cracks, and every other deformity of hoof—and fitted with new harness.

The next day they were hitched to the brand-new red-wheeled wagon (empty), with a green box and white wagon sheet, and I drove them about the town in triumph. The horses stood about 16½ hands, and weighed, I should say, about 1250 pounds each. One was a blue roan and the other a red. I gave \$350 for the span. I will explain that even had the horses been true workers they would have starved on the trail in about a month, owing to their size, or else we should have been obliged to haul oats to feed them with.

I have forgotten the exact date of our

departure from Walla-Walla, but it was on Saturday afternoon, about the middle of April, 1878. Our saddle-horses were held in a corral back of a livery stable near the west end of the town. I first started the wagon, driven by the cook, out of town about two o'clock, and then got my men together. We all mounted and rode to the corral where the loose horses were held. I posted the men so as to hold them together and tried the manoeuvre which the Indians had shown us, as described above.

To this day I can't explain what happened, but in a jiffy there was not a horse to be seen. Have you ever poured quicksilver on a smooth floor? Well, those horses scattered through the streets of Walla-Walla in just about the same manner. The citizen onlookers tried, of course, to head them off, but only made matters worse, as they did not know in which direction we wanted to go. One or two of the riders had been bucked off, their animals seemingly having entered thoroughly into the spirit of the thing, and altogether we were in a mess.

At the end of three hours, and with the help of a large number of volunteers, we finally gathered on the prairie, about a mile out, all of

the bunch but ten or twelve head, and started them towards the place where we had decided to make camp.

With two men on fresh horses I returned to hunt those that were missing. I felt sure that we had seen the last of them, and you can imagine my relief when I learned that they were all back in the corral. A couple of native punchers had run across them, and, recognizing our road-brand (a figure 7 on the left shoulder), they knew they were strays and brought them in. It was too late to stop for them, so I hurried back to where I supposed the camp would be, some ten miles out on the road to Pendleton, which was our objective point. About midway I overtook the outfit, and then I knew what trouble really meant.

The road to that point had been a gently descending grade, so that all my fine-grained draught-horses had to do was to keep out of the way of the wagon. This they managed to do and everything seemed to the cook to be rosy, until, alas! they came to a dry slough with a steep uptake on the far side, and that is just where I found them—stalled. The cook was alone when he came to anchor, as we were all playing-hide-and-seek with the horses through the streets of Walla-Walla,

and for nearly three hours he had been arguing with my \$350 pets. When the boys overtook him, of course each knew a trick guaranteed to start a balky horse, and from the looks of things I think everything from a rawhide to a bonfire had been tried, but without producing the desired result.

To make matters more interesting, it was discovered that no one had filled the water barrel, and as we happened to be a mile or two from anything that looked like water, the prospect for supper was most dismal.

To add to my chagrin, Rand met us while on his way to Walla-Walla, and had an opportunity to see what a valuable purchase I had made. It is an actual fact that, after entirely unloading the wagon and hitching to it ropes, on which four ponies pulled by the horn of the saddle, we were just able to get the team out of the slough and haul them to one side of the road. I was tempted to shoot them both on the spot, but restrained myself, although I believe it would have been a merciful thing. We traded them off about a month later and came out nearly even, but I hate to think of the beatings those poor brutes must have suffered before they were finally clubbed to death by some irate farmer.

The men rode on to the nearest farm where they could corral their horses and get supper. Rand, my partner, hurried into Walla-Walla to purchase some other work horses, and the cook and I stayed with the wagon. We had "sowbelly" straight for supper. My reflections that evening were, to say the least, sombre. Everything seemed to be hopelessly against us. I was ignorant of how things should be done; most of the men were even more so; my confidence in myself had had a bad jolt on account of my horse deal, and on top of it I was tired out and hungry. Moreover, the sly nudges and grins told me I had lost standing with my men. If some good fairy had come along just then and offered me the position of sweeper-out in almost any old office in Boston, I should have "set the road afire" in my haste to get there.

At daybreak the next morning, one of the boys came back from the ranch to stand guard over the wagon, and the cook and I rode over for breakfast. I don't think I ever enjoyed a drink of cold water as much before. The fried salt pork we ate for supper had had its effect, and it had been such a long stretch without moisture from the afternoon before, that we were well tuned up. Things looked brighter

after we had relieved our physical wants, and by noon we were on the march again.

Rand was successful in getting a new team, which turned out to be a good one and lasted the whole way through to Laramie. We then set out for the first point where we were to gather up our herd of cattle. Before we had been on the road two days every man had a nickname and likewise every horse. I can remember some of them, and give them to show the poetic temperament of this particular outfit. There was Braska (diminutive for Nebraska), Doughboy Jim (the ex-soldier), the Parson (Methodist preacher), Bilius, Texas, Doctor (the cook), Raas, and Chubb. Some of the names given the horses were as follows: Shakespeare, Loud-skin, One-eyed Riley, Peacock, Stargazer, George Washington, Yellow, Whitebird, Tolerablefat, Strawberry, Gold-note, Baker-City, Calico, Straight-edge, Stump, Nellie Bly, Appaloosie, Coalie Buffalo, and Rattler.



CHAPTER VIII

RECEIVING THE CATTLE

OUR first rendezvous for the purpose of receiving and paying for our cattle was scheduled to take place at Gorman's ranch, on the John Day's River in Wasco County, about eighty miles as the crow flies west of Pendleton, and nine miles above Scott's Bridge. By the road from Walla-Walla it must have been at least 160 miles. We pressed on as fast as we could with our band of horses, but our speed was accelerated by another motive than the mere wish to keep an engagement by a certain day.

For some time there had been rumors of trouble with the Indians to the eastward of us, but they were so vague and we were so busy about other things that we paid little attention to them. About a week before we left Walla-Walla, our friend Ryan of the firm of Ryan & Lang came in from the south and reported that things were looking very promising for

an outbreak on the part of the Bannock and Shoshone (or Snake) Indians from their reservation, at Fort Hall, Idaho. Ryan was not an alarmist, nor had he any romantic illusions in regard to our red brothers and therefore his statements were to be relied upon. Upon his advice we applied to the officer in command of Fort Walla-Walla for a military escort across the continent. We realized that we might just as well have asked King Edward for the loan of a troop of Coldstream guards to escort us across South Africa, so we were not cast down by the refusal.

I suppose at the time there were two hundred soldiers at Fort Walla-Walla, so if an escort had been given to each herd on the trail—they numbered probably ten or twelve that summer—those left to subdue the enemy would not have been overwhelming.

It may be instructive to some of the members of peace societies, and likewise the British War Office, to be told that at that time the Territories of Washington and Idaho, northern Nevada and western Wyoming, and the eastern half of the State of Oregon—which, roughly speaking, measured between six and seven hundred miles square and on which there were some fourteen or fifteen tribes of Indians,

supposedly on reservations—were policed by possibly two thousand officers and soldiers of the United States Army. They were stationed at about a dozen forts (so-called) in bunches of from fifty to two hundred men, and separated by hundreds of miles of mountain ranges and alkali deserts with unfordable rivers and lava beds thrown in, and no means of transportation but the army wagon and pack mule. And yet this handful of Uncle Sam's boys kept things in fairly good order. This fact is more remarkable in that I believe that every time an Indian was killed it was an even chance that the officer in command would be court-martialled for daring to harm one of the wards of the nation.

The gallant and laborious service rendered by the regulars on the frontier from 1865 to 1885 has never been sufficiently recognized or appreciated by the people of the United States, and never will be. One reason, I suppose, for this is, that at that time uniforms with fancy facings were not worn, and the army was not officered by leading citizens from the Eastern States. I saw some troops of the Second Cavalry when they returned to Fort Saunders from the campaign against the Sioux (under General Crook in 1876). They had

been out all summer and half the winter and had been reduced to a mule meat diet for some six weeks. Their horses were skin and bone and I doubt if there was a whole pair of trousers in the command; but they struck me as being just about ripe enough to pick, from a fighting standpoint.

The military escort being denied us, we requisitioned the Government for arms and ammunition to defend ourselves. These also were denied us; I don't remember for what reason. Finally through Ryan's good offices we succeeded in getting 15 rifles and 2000 rounds of ammunition. Those guns and that ammunition were the cause of more anxiety than the Indians. They were what were called needle guns, or old Springfield rifles that probably had been issued towards the end of the Civil War. I don't know what they had been used for in the meantime, but the sights were generally gone and they were in a generally dilapidated condition. The ammunition was packed in two boxes and as it was often necessary to unload our wagon to get it over a steep part of the trail, the boxes became a source of much merriment and discomfort to those who had to carry them up the hill on their backs.

Gorman's ranch was so-named after the senior owner. He was a character and had some peculiar habits. One of his idiosyncrasies was to roam about clad in nothing but a night-gown, a big straw hat, and top boots. When very warm from work, he would throw the tail of his night-gown over his head and stand in the breeze. He was very stout and swore like a pirate, but, withal, was very kind hearted and hospitable.

His partner, Sweet, was well named. He was the housekeeper, and everything was as neat as wax. These two old fellows had been "pards" for twenty odd years and they acted more like a married couple than two men. They had fruit of all kinds in the orchard and garden, and every year Sweet made his preserves and pickles just like an old Pennsylvania Dutch farmer's wife. I had occasion to stop several times with them and those preserves left a lasting impression, as did also the number of rattlesnakes in the vicinity of their ranch.

The country is broken with steep cliffs of lava rock, out of which bubble springs of clear water. This combination makes the snakes' paradise. At midday, when the sun beat down and warmed the rocks, the reptiles would come out by the hundred to bask. This was

especially so that spring when the nights were still chilly. There was one place on the road about half-way between Scott's Bridge and the ranch, where one actually could smell them. At least, I never could account for the peculiar sour and sickening odor that hung about this spot in any other way. The rocks on the face of the bluff seemed to wriggle with them. During all my stay in that locality, I thought continually of this vermin, and many a time have I gone without a drink of water from a spring, because I did not dare get off my horse in the long grass.

When we made camp, on our arrival near this ranch, the cook immediately burnt the old grass from about a spring, and I heard the boys say afterwards that they killed quite a number of snakes that were driven out by the flames. I never got accustomed to reptiles, although I have lived more or less in countries where they were a staple article, and I believe I share with every other man that has slept on the prairie the belief that one should stop and kill a snake, no matter if he is running from a sheriff's posse.

The cattle we were to receive and brand at this point came from the Willamette River or Webfoot Country. The term "Webfoot" was

given to the settlers west of the Cascades range of mountains. The reason was that there was so much rain and mud in this section that feet webbed like those of a duck were necessary to keep on top of the ground and also to enable one to cross the innumerable sloughs. The "Webfeet" were looked down upon by those who lived and grazed their herds of sheep and cattle on the high "tableaus" of central and eastern Oregon and Washington Territory very much in the same manner that a Highlander regards with contempt the farmer of the Lowlands.

The cattle we had contracted for had been driven about one hundred miles. They numbered about seven hundred steer-cattle of all ages, from yearlings to five-year-olds, and there were some twenty or thirty owners. The corrals were small and flimsy affairs, only built to hold horses or milk cows and, altogether, the problem as to how we were to sort, grade, and brand this number seemed difficult, not to say hopeless, to our inexperienced minds. We tackled the job, however, as we did everything else, with an outward air of perfect confidence, not to say superciliousness, but with eyes and ears wide open for tips.

After taking a week to do what could have been done easily in a couple of days by any one knowing how, we drove off in triumph, leaving the impression (we hoped) that we had been born on the opposite side of a cactus bush from a Texas steer, and had been fed on raw hide rope and alkali water, and could pretty nearly call the turn on the age of anything barring a parrot or an elephant.

This is the way we worked it : Rand was settled upon to call ages. I kept tally, and the branding was left to the only Brown. To the uninitiated I will explain that a cow-brute shows its age in two ways—by its teeth and horns. The teeth are infallible, but one must have a quick eye and be a good judge of size to be sure by the other method. As a wild steer does not show its teeth on request—and it would be a long and difficult task to look at them by force—the horns are taken as evidence, except where opinions between buyer and seller differ, and then the animal is thrown or tied up and his mouth examined.

It may surprise some persons to learn that a cow has no upper front teeth. A calf has a full set of small or milk teeth in the lower jaw ; when a yearling, it gets two large ones in the centre of the lower jaw and two more each

year until it has eight, or a full mouth, and it is then five years old. The horns at a year old show an inch or two out of the hide ; at two, there is usually an enlargement or button on the end ; at three, the horn is smooth and perfect, and at four it shows a ring at the butt. Each year after that another ring appears, showing the growth of the horn. Where a calf has been allowed to run as a bull for over a year, the horns become heavier and coarser, as does also the head, and the animal becomes "staggy" and is not considered to be worth as much as a clean-headed steer.

Then we had to look out for what were known as "churn dash" calves, or those belonging to milk cows and which had not had the full benefit of the mother's milk. They show scrawny and wizened alongside of the range cattle and they too are sold at a discount. You can see that it is no easy thing to note all these characteristics while the brute is struggling in a chute or else tearing by on a dead run.

The most satisfactory way to age and classify wild cattle is to run them through a chute or V-shaped lane, built of logs and poles long enough to hold eight or ten head at a time ; you can walk on a platform and get a close

look at their heads, and it also enables you to see what brands they have, a necessary thing, as by the brands the owners are known. We had no such rigging at this time, so we had to cut off little bunches from the main herd and put them in a small circular corral, from the top rail of which the horns and brands were examined and their owners and age recorded except in case of disagreement. About every other animal being the cause of an argument, a detailed history of its birth and parentage, with an anecdote or two of its early youth and adolescence became necessary, to fortify the position of the claimant, so it can readily be seen how the week was spent.

I kept tally of the brands, and that, too, was an interesting experience, as showing how a man can distort his vision. It was quite a common occurrence for two men to swear a circle was a square, or a cross a star and *vice-versa*, and come to blows over it. After the cattle had been aged and tallied, Brown would take them down the river to another corral that had a branding chute, and affix our road mark—a 7 on the left hip.

Brown stated, on his hope to meet the angels in heaven, that every cow-brute was branded possibly better than any other set of brutes

had ever been before, etc. He lied, as we found out later that most of them had but a "hair brand," and we had to do the thing over again.

This was one occasion when we had trouble about paying for the stock. We found that the owners would accept nothing in payment but gold or silver, and they threatened to drive them on and deliver to another buyer if we did not accede to their demands. One man with only two head to sell was especially insistent on getting gold. We figured out that it would take between ten and eleven thousand dollars to pay for them, and the question was, how to get the coin there in the quickest possible time. It was finally decided that I should ride to The Dalles, about fifty miles distant, and wire to Portland for the gold, which could be forwarded by steamer to me there, and I could then bring it across on the stage to Scott's Bridge and thence on horseback to Gorman's.

I lit out that night and got to town early in the morning. I could not take a short cut across the country as the rivers (the John Day's and Deschutes) were swimming high and rapid, and I did not know the crossings, so that it must have been a good sixty miles I made that night. I had a good horse, and I

don't remember that it seemed much of a ride. It only goes to show how youth, and a country in which there are a good many acres to the mile, accustom one to long distance riding. I remember it was Thursday morning that I arrived at The Dalles, and the cash came up on the steamer, arriving Sunday at noon, from Portland.

The bank at The Dalles was run by the same people that kept the largest general merchandise store. I think the name was McCammon ; at all events it was Scotch, and they were very accommodating. The idea of carrying this amount of money did not worry me much, but I thought it best to inquire as to the character of the stage-driver, who was to go out that same evening, so I would know what to expect from him. The bankers told me that he was absolutely reliable, and after I had consulted with him, he agreed to take out a buckboard instead of the regular stage-coach.

It so happened that only one other passenger was booked for that trip, and it was said to be doubtful if he would go. It was also arranged that the gold should be put in bags, each to contain \$2000, and these bags were to be put in others filled with sawdust, and done up as though they contained groceries.

At stage time, about 7 o'clock in the evening—it was Sunday—nearly the whole population of the town was standing round as on-lookers, and it seemed to me that I saw several individuals who took more than an ordinary interest in the loading of the “groceries” into the box under the seat. I carried out one bag in as nonchalant a manner as possible, but even with the greatest care, I could not prevent the clink of the coin as I put it in its place. It is surprising how that sound penetrates and is different from any other.

The third passenger turned up at the last minute, and he certainly did look tough. The driver and I occupied the only seat so he was told to ride on the mail-sacks behind. This sounds uncomfortable, but by piling them properly a very easy seat can be made. I have ridden many a mile by preference in this way. We had a good-looking team of horses, and with a flourish of the whip and a facetious remark the driver started us on our journey back to Scott's Bridge, just as it was getting dark. The road for the first three or four miles—or until we reached the bridge across the Deschutes River—was very sandy, and it was here that I expected trouble if any came. I knew no one could swim the river, as it was a raging torrent,

and if any persons bent on robbery crossed the bridge ahead or behind us, we should at least have some idea as to who they were.

The advice given me by the driver, while we stood together in the bank just before starting, will show we were not unprepared for trouble. It was short and to the point.

"Got a gun?"

"Yes." I showed him a 45-calibre Smith & Wesson.

"Skookum (Chinook for 'first-rate'). Hold it on your knees till we get across the bridge; if any one tries to stop us, shoot that Coyote on the mail sacks first and then keep shooting,—never mind me, I'll keep the horses going."

It is needless to say, I kept one eye on the "Coyote" but nothing happened. We ran the horses when the road permitted, and made good time to the bridge. I have never yet decided how narrow an escape we had, but the third passenger got off at the toll-house on the bridge, saying he guessed he'd wait until the regular stage came, as it was too hard riding on the sacks.

I imagine the driver knew more than he let on, and it no doubt was largely owing to the time we made, that our "Coyote's" friends failed to make connection with him at the

roadside. We got through all right at about daylight in the morning. I gave the driver three twenty-dollar pieces which seemed to please him, although he said nothing. However, he showed a certain amount of appreciation by inviting me to join him in a drink and paying for it out of one of the "pieces of twenty."

I remember with satisfaction that I evened up for my trouble on this journey by "euchring" that particular one of the cattle owners who had only two head of cattle and who had been doing most of the talking and kicking. In fact he had worked the others up to demand the cash payments. I found that this gentleman's holdings consisted of one two-year-old and an ox about six years. The "two" was a "short," (that is, it was about twenty months old) so we told him we would only take it at a discount and would not accept his ox at all. He cursed and threatened in vain, and, finally, when we had settled with all the others and were about to start the herd, leaving him with his two animals a hundred miles from home and no money, we relented and took them both for ten dollars.

Gorman's farewell to us was memorable. We had a two-gallon keg of whiskey that we

carried as a cure for "snake-bite." In order to be sure that none of the men would get at it, we placed it in Gorman's custody. He and Sweet, his partner, stood off temptation just two days. About six o'clock on the morning of the third day they both came out to the corral where we were already at work. Their bloodshot eyes and unsteady gait gave us an inkling of what had happened to our keg of whiskey.

Gorman was in his night-shirt as usual, and as the morning was warm and his blood had been fired somewhat by the liquor, he was perspiring freely. He fanned himself vigorously by flapping the tail of the garment, and cautiously mounted to a seat on the top rail of the corral.

"Gen'lmen," he said thickly, "'fore you leave I 've got to 'shpress my opinion 'o zhem damned webfeet. Zhey are zhe curse of zhis country, damn 'em."

He kept up his harangue for fully an hour abusing the inhabitants of the lowlands with great vehemence. He and Sweet then retired, but as the sailors say, they "bled the buoy" to death before they finally went to sleep. An Oregonian can be trusted with money, but not with whiskey.

to our bundle. When we started the cattle, having just come off the finest feed in the world,—bunch grass—many of them were in fine flesh. In fact a great many of them could have been killed for beef. But we soon found that an excess of fat, at the start, anyhow, was not the thing to be desired.

It was now the end of June and the sun was getting very hot in the middle of the day. The country was rolling and the trail crossed a number of divides between the watercourses. Some of these hills, though not long, were steep, and we soon found that our overfat stock began to die from a sort of apoplexy, brought on by their exertions in climbing these steep slopes. For several days we lost from five to ten head from this cause, and that was another lesson, costly, but necessary.

For a beginner on the trail to see his finest steers lie down and die in the first month, when he knows he has several more months ahead of him, is like seeing a ship wrecked when just starting on a voyage, and it surrounds him with a gloom that can be cut with a dull axe. Visions of flowers for his best girl and trips to Europe fade, and the best he can see ahead of him is a cabin in the mountains with a milk cow to give him luxuries. Later on, however,

the boot was on the other leg—fat cattle did not bother us. They got so thin that we had to wrap them with rawhide to keep them from falling apart.

To drive cattle on the trail is simple enough when you know how, but cows, like human beings, must be drilled before they can march. The proper way is as follows: At about sundown a "bed ground" is selected. It should be as level as possible, half a mile to a mile from water, on high ground and free from sagebrush. This, of course, is the ideal spot which is seldom found, but one tries to come as near to it as possible. It is also well to have it at least half a mile from camp.

If the grass and water have been plentiful, the herd is liable to be in a cheerful frame of mind and allows itself to be rounded into a bunch gradually. This is usually done by about four or five hands, the rest of the men being sent to camp for supper, among them those who go "on herd" the first part of the night. The latter get fresh horses, and about eight o'clock go out and send in the men who have bedded the herd.

When it becomes dark the animals lie down, and if nothing happens to disturb them, they remain perfectly quiet until about twelve, when

they get up, stretch and turn over, and then peace reigns until the first break of day. Some times a steer will create a commotion by horn-ing another to make it give up its comfortable warm bed, but that amounts to little. Under these rose-colored conditions, two men can easily hold 2500 head of cattle.

The men ride around the herd in different directions, keeping about fifty yards from the edge of the bunch, and the real cowboy will sing to his herd as a mother sings to her baby, the music of the lullaby. There is no doubt that the sound of a human voice has a quieting effect on a dumb brute, and many a stampede has been avoided by this practice of singing. The length of the watches varies according to circumstances. If everything runs smooth, and the cattle hold easy, it is usual to have but two periods—from eight at night till four or five in the morning. But some times it is necessary to reduce the time to two hours per watch, and then every man takes a turn during the night. Some times all hands are up all night, so that there really is no hard and fast rule. Ordinarily when the period of the watch is up one of the men on herd comes into camp and wakens the relief, and woe to the man who cuts off any from his own time. There is always liable

to be more than one watch in camp, and they are kept pretty well synchronized, so that the plea of the watch being wrong won't work, and the shirker has his life made very unhappy.

As soon as it is light enough to see, the cattle get on their legs and begin to look for breakfast. When the herd begins to graze the leaders naturally go in the direction in which they happen to be facing. It is then that the cowboy who knows his business comes in. With the help of one other he will "point" them in the direction in which the herd is being driven without fuss or noise.

The method is simple. One man keeps, we will say, to the north of the herd and the other works the head animals from the south until they reach him, when, like water meeting an obstacle, they will seek the spot of least resistance, which in this case would be to the east, as otherwise they would face back into the main bunch. Thus, a herd takes the shape of a wedge, or of a flock of wild geese on the wing, if on the open prairie; if in a narrow defile, they, of course, lengthen out. The riders gradually take up their places on either flank and the rear is brought up by four or five men "pounding 'em on the back," as the term goes.

In all herds there are a certain number of

animals that are always in the lead, unless disabled by lameness. These may number a couple of hundred head, and of this number there are half a dozen or so that are usually in the van. The "leaders" are soon known, and it is necessary to be able to distinguish them from the main herd, for the reason that if any of them are missing after a night stampede, you can be sure that your lead cattle have not been rounded up.

The tail end of a herd is called the "drag" and never was a truer appellation given. Under the best of circumstances, to push along the cripples and worn-out "critters," of which there are always quite a number, is a task that I don't believe old Job could handle with any degree of complacence. If the wind is against you, the dust from four times two thousand feet is coming directly into your face—and mind you, most of the soil on the trail has a good proportion of alkali. The sun comes down hot, and sometimes, if water is scarce and the drive is a long one, it may mean seven or eight hours without a drink. It is almost as trying as being marooned, to see the main body of the herd gradually disappearing ahead with the grub-wagon and the horse herd, and find yourself with two or three

other unfortunates trying to hurry up, by all the means known to the profession, a couple of hundred laggards.

Even the camp has its routine. The cook gets up generally about 2.30 or 3 A.M., according to his nature, and proceeds to get breakfast. Just as soon as he can see to count his horses the "cavarango" or "horse wrangler" rounds up his bunch and brings them into camp.

I must here explain that in the evening, when all the horses have been turned loose, except those needed for night herding, the "wrangler" gathers them in a bunch and drives them off to wherever he thinks he will find good grass, and holds them there until morning.

The science of night herding horses is a difficult one for white men to learn. To Indians and Mexicans it is easy, as they have been brought up to it. The trouble generally lies in the fact that the herder is either too careful or not careful enough. A man who keeps his bunch too close because he is afraid some will get away will knock the flesh off his horses almost as much as hard riding. On the other hand, the careless or sleepy man will always be out several horses in the morning, and they are usually the best of the lot. An

Indian or Mexican seems to have the faculty of sleeping with one eye open. They rarely lose an animal, and if the weather is of the average, they will stand all night, and yet, except for a nap of perhaps an hour at noon, they don't seem to need sleep; at all events, they don't regularly get into their blankets—if they have any.

Around the neck of one of the horses—preferably an old mare kept for the occasion and called the bell mare—a cow-bell is strapped. After a week or so the horses become attached to the sound and will always keep within earshot unless something alarms them or they are thirsty and smell water, in which case nothing but a rope will hold them. The bell is also a great help to the cavarango, as by the sound he can tell the direction and distance the horses are from him, and he can also tell if they are grazing or moving away from him.

We left the cook preparing breakfast, and the horse herd coming toward camp; we will now see what the men are doing. In every cow camp you will find some one, who, either from a bad conscience, a lumpy bed, or vigorous appetite will get up when he hears the cook stirring. Sometimes he is a cheerful

soul and begins to bellow at the top of his lungs. Again, he is a particular bird, and immediately puts on his spurs and chaps, rolls up his blankets, and cords the bundle, all with a running accompaniment of jingles, snorts, and oaths. Then he tramps right through the prostrate forms and dumps his bedding into the wagon.

It is a peculiar and disagreeable sensation, when lying with your ear close to the ground, to hear a man with a big spur tramping in your immediate neighborhood. I think the sound travels more clearly than it does higher up. At all events, with your senses only half aroused, you are dead sure that the next step the man takes is going to land his heel in your mouth and his spur in your eye. This has the necessary effect, and one by one the weary boys wake with a moan or an oath, stretch and get on their feet.

At one time on this trail we had a man who invariably yodled the following ditty as his greeting to the newborn day :

"I 'm ragged I know,
But look at the rigging on Billy Barlow."

The last note was a prolonged falsetto howl. We got rid of him as soon as possible.

Dressing consists of pulling on your boots and trousers and chaps. Washing is usually postponed until the sun comes up. Each man, as he happens to be slovenly or neat in his habits, rolls and ties up his bed and takes it to the wagon to await loading.

By this time the horses are near at hand, a rope about fifty feet long is tied to the top of the front wagon wheel and another to the rear one, and the loose ends are held by two men standing off and pulling taut on them, thus making a V. This forms a corral.

One of the peculiarities of a bronco is that he does n't like a loose rope, and he won't jump it unless he has to. It is also astonishing to the uninitiated, and I myself have often wondered at the impunity with which a man can walk in among a lot of broncos and push them about without getting kicked. I don't remember ever hearing of a man being hurt in that way. Yet I have frequently found myself at the business end of an unbroken pony in a crowded corral, even being shoved against him by another horse, and the only effect was to make him scramble to get farther away.

On the trail the horses soon get to know what is wanted, and generally it is an easy matter to catch your horse, but sometimes

there is a "breacher" in the band, and he makes all kinds of trouble. In the first place he will dodge a rope, and every time he sees a chance to make a break for the prairie he will do so, always followed by all the rowdies. When a pony shows he is an artist in that line he is generally dropped out of the bunch and left to graze peacefully, unless it is his turn to be ridden, and then things are different. One day a horse with this trait, in his efforts to dodge through the lines, laid a course directly across the spot where the cook had piled his hot breakfast. The obituary notice and set of resolutions passed by the members of that camp, and placed near his carcass, would bring tears to your eyes, but I doubt if they could be published.

Each man catches and saddles the horse he wishes to ride that morning, and then eats his breakfast and skips for the herd. Horses are caught up for the men who may not yet have come in from night herd, and are tied to the wagon, as are also the work horses for the wagon.

Finally, when all hands have been fed, the cook proceeds to wash up his dishes and pack his wagon. The horse herder, unless he has lost some horses during the night, generally

lends a hand, sometimes grudgingly, but usually the cook and he work well together. A good cook always has his eye on the wood supply. If he happens to be at a camp where it is plentiful, he will get the herder to "snake up" a log or two, and after he has loaded his outfit and blankets he will put the wood on top of the load. It is the same with his water barrel; if he comes to a good spring he will empty out the stale water and replenish his supply. I have had cooks, confound them, who did not have sense enough to think, but I must say, that, as a general rule, the camp cook, although belonging to an independent, drunken, disagreeable tribe, usually has more than average intelligence.

The horses are harnessed—most large outfits have four to the wagon—and when all is ready, the cook pulls out in the direction the herd has gone, and the horse herd falls in behind. In this way they proceed until they are halted for the midday rest and meal, by some one detailed to hunt up a camping spot.

The distance made in a day depends on circumstances over which you have absolutely no control. The conditions that govern are weather, topography, water, grass and behavior of cattle. With everything coming

your way it is easy to make ten miles, or even twelve, and find your cattle, horses, and men full of food and good nature when bedding down time comes. Then again, you can work like a steam drill and starve like a Hindoo for food and drink for eighteen hours, and only make five or six miles.

I think, however, that taking the average for six months on the trail, a distance of seven or eight miles a day is fair, with three meals a day three fourths of the time. The other fourth is divided between afternoon teas and lying down where night finds you with nothing to feed on but the bawl of a hungry steer, and the hope that you 'll find the main herd in the morning.

The object, of course, is to move the herd, and at the same time keep all the flesh on them that you can. For this reason undue haste is bad, and empty bellies are worse. A man with experience will not try to keep his cattle on the main-travelled trail, except when he has to in order to get through mountain passes, or where the valleys are narrow.

The best plan is to send two scouts ahead each day, or go yourself, and see what the prospects are for the next day's drive. We used to ride forward on the trail a distance of

about fifteen miles, so as to know what direction the road took, then separate, going to the right and left from the trail for a distance of five or six miles, and thence back to camp. In that way we knew exactly where the bad places were, and where water could be found, if at all, in sufficient quantities to water a big herd, and also where the best feed was for five miles on each side of the trail. At night we would compare notes and the man who could show the best country took charge of the herd next day.

It was great training for a young man, and to-day I am often surprised that I recognize a district I have only been over once, and that perhaps a long period back, and it is seldom that I lose my way either in a city or country. Unconsciously I make note of land-marks. As I write this there are many portions of the Oregon trail that stand out as clearly as a photograph, but I have not been there for twenty odd years.

We always tried to get the wagon to the place where we were to camp for the night, somewhere about five in the afternoon. We would get our supper at about sundown, and immediately after that, if things were normal, the men would hunt about for a smooth place, and unroll their beds.

I always think of Balch as he looked about for a depression in the ground to accommodate his hip bone. He contended that if that part of his anatomy was taken care of he did not care about the rest. Sand is the most uncomfortable bed because it packs so hard. When you find a thick growth of sagebrush, it takes a high order of intelligence so to arrange your couch that you can dove-tail in between the stumps—one in the small of your back, one back of your knees—always being careful not to get your head too near a clump, as there is the ever-present fear that a rattlesnake may be concealed in the bunch.

The last thing a man does before he turns in is to see that his saddle, bridle, and rope are handy and ready to be thrown on a horse at a minute's notice, as, like a fireman, he never knows when all hands will be routed out by an alarm.



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CHAPTER X

CROSSING THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

WHEN we reached Lone Rock with our cattle, we stopped to await the arrival of a bunch that was being brought down from the neighborhood of Lewiston, Idaho, by Balch. In our ignorance and inexperience, we chose the worst place possible to hold the cattle—in a short lane with wheat fields on both sides, protected only by the flimsiest kind of fences. Our men were stationed at either end of the lane, some on foot and some on horseback, and the result was that the cattle got to “milling,” and bulged through the fences into the field.

To add to the confusion, in the middle of the night we heard cattle coming in the distance, and before we knew what was happening, the Idaho bunch was on top of us. Away went the whole business, over fences and

anything else that was in the way. Luckily a mile beyond was a cañon about two miles long with steep sides, into which more by good luck than skill on our part, the larger part of the herd ran. We finally brought them to a halt at about daylight, with the assistance of two or three ranchmen, who made up their minds that, if they did not help, we would overrun the whole country.

I had been ill for about ten days with some kind of a complaint, and by actual figuring had had but six hours in my blankets in seventy-three hours, although I slept on my horse whenever he stood still. As a result, I was at the end of my rope. I remember that morning, after I had drunk some coffee, which was all I could keep on my stomach, and had seen that the cattle were grazing on the hillsides where there was plenty of bunch grass, I turned my horse loose and rolled up near a big rock, and never moved until after sundown.

In trying to keep awake I had put tobacco juice in my eyes, and the consequence was that with the dust, I produced as badly inflamed a pair of optics as could be seen in any hospital. I could hardly open them, and, to add to my woe, some of the men suggested that I had contracted an unpleasant disease of

the eye quite prevalent among the Indians, and which eventually leads to blindness.

Balch was badly worn out by his Idaho trip, so we decided to wait awhile to rest up, and, if possible, learn something more about driving before we started. Finally, on the fifth of June, having loaded our wagon with what we considered was necessary, we were ready to tackle the road for keeps. The night before we started we heard vague rumors that there was more trouble brewing among the Indians, but we had troubles of our own, so paid little heed. Brown, however, gave us some yarns about his prowess as an Indian fighter, and that made us feel safe.

We were then just at the edge of the Umatilla Indian reservation at a place called Pilot Rock, and the trail leads straight for a pass in the Blue Mountains in an easterly direction. There are two roads through the mountains, one called the Meacham, where the N. P. R. R. now runs, and one to Daly's ranch, which is to the south. We selected the latter. We drove out to the foothills at the mouth of the cañon and camped. The next day we made it through to Daly's without much trouble and camped on Beaver Creek. Before reaching Daly's we began to strike timber, but nothing very bad,

and we congratulated ourselves that night on our successful start.

I forgot to say that we hired three or four extra men to help us over the mountains, and I believe in the light of after events, that they put up a job to lose our cattle for us. They were among the venders of the cattle and knew that should any escape they would return to their own ranges and they would then have a chance to sell them over again that year, as buyers were none too particular about brands.

Be that as it may, they told us it was a drive of but eight or nine miles from Beaver Creek to North Powder River, which was on the east side of the range and beyond the timber. Instead of that it was the longest twenty-five miles I ever rode or travelled. The leaders struck out at four in the morning, and that was the last I saw of them and the man with them, until eleven o'clock that night.

I really don't think I can describe that piece of road, but Bunyan in his *Pilgrim's Progress* gives nothing to compare with it. I waited to see that the wagon got started and thought, as I was still on the sick list, that I would take it easy and help bring in the stragglers. The cattle were fresh and for the first few hours

strung out in a line all right. Then we struck the timber.

When I speak of timber, I want you to understand that I am talking of a primeval forest of pines and scrub underbrush with the trunks of fallen and rotten trees lying as thick as sardines in a box, with mud-holes and rock thrown in promiscuously. Our troubles began almost from the start as far as the wagon was concerned. The trail plunged into this dense growth, and the road was only about wide enough for two wagons to pass; the trees had been chopped off about two feet above the ground, and where it was not absolutely necessary to pull them aside, they were left where they fell. The snow was still in drifts, and where it had melted it made bog-holes. Our wagon was far too heavily laden, and, although the team was a good and true one, the job was more than horseflesh could stand.

About ten o'clock I overtook the "drag." The cattle were hungry. There had been absolutely nothing for them to eat except the pine needles, and, to add to their discomfort, they began to get thirsty. Then the picnic began. We could not keep them on the trail. Every water-hole they came to or smelled

invited them, and they would make a break into the brush to find it. At noon I rode ahead from the rear and found the wagon stalled on what, from a distance, looked like a Giant's Causeway. The only thing imagination can liken that road to is a road macadamized by Titans just after the first layer of rocks had been laid.

When the wagon was fitted out, we had, with great foresight, put a number of hooks underneath the wagon box upon which to hang our kettles, pots, etc., and that very morning I had thought how really bright the idea was. When I cast my eye underneath the wagon to see just how near the rocks came to the axle, I discovered that those pots and kettles looked more like a lot of hats after a cane-rush than anything else. Not one was worth trying to repair, bent, battered, and punctured as they were.

We got out somehow and then made an attempt at dinner, but as the men were scattered for a distance of ten or fifteen miles and none knew where the wagon was, the repast was not a success. One hill we came to, although short, was glare rock. We had to deadlock both hind wheels and then cut down a pine tree and lop off the branch, making a sort

of *chevaux de frise*. This we tied by the top with a rope to the hind axle of the wagon so that the branches would dig into the ground. We then took off our lead team and coasted down the hill. The horses were on a run before they reached the bottom and just managed to keep out of the way of the wagon.

It was impossible to ride a horse through the brush, so we all dismounted and turned them into the road and drove the cattle on foot. What a day that was! At sundown I gave out and got to the wagon. The cook at that time was Foss, the Methodist preacher. I found him in a very agitated frame of mind owing to the fact that a satchel in which he carried some sermons, tracts, a Bible—and his “charts to Heaven”—had been jounced out of the wagon and lost. I told him to take my horse and go back and perhaps he would find them. At all events, he could help the worn-out men on the tail end. I had to tie myself on the seat, otherwise I should have been pitched out every other minute. That wagon held together, and I have always taken off my hat to Studebaker, the manufacturer, ever since.

As it grew darker I could not see to drive the horses and I let them go as they pleased. All I could hear was the crushing of the brush

by the cattle and the faint yells of the men who were trying to push them back into the trail. We had a pretty bum crew, but they worked like heroes that day and mostly on an empty stomach. If the darkness of night had not been relieved by the bright light of the full moon I don't know what we would have done.

I think I must have got "groggy" toward the end, as it is all indistinct. I certainly did not drive the horses, and how we ever reached camp is something that Providence only knows. The men that were sent back next day said that the wagon wheels at one place were within a foot of a cliff that went down several hundred feet. I don't remember seeing it. I finally caught the glimmer of a camp-fire and don't remember anything else until I found some one holding me up and trying to force hot coffee down the neck of my shirt. It was hot and it did the trick.

That fire was a cheerful sight. The men had thrown themselves down anywhere, too worn out to get the blankets out of the wagon. Foss, however, had found his "charts," it seems, and had gotten together some kind of a meal for which all hands were grateful. As I lay on my back looking up at the moon I

mentally figured that about one half the herd had escaped and were then on their way to join their relations, full of anecdotes as to the habits and custom of the green tenderfoot from the land of the rising sun.

The saying that "nothing can stop the U. S. Mail but hell and highwater," may be true, but it also applies to a herd of hungry cattle. That night it took all hands in two watches to keep the remnant of our herd from walking off, and when daylight came and we could let them graze, it took a load off our shoulders. We dropped down the stream to a broad streak of prairie, and then counted them to see how many we were short.

This was another new job, but we had one man who knew how to do it—and we finally succeeded after a try or two. A bunch of a hundred or less of the leaders are separated from the herd and driven off about two hundred yards and counted. Then two men, having provided themselves with pebbles or matches to keep tally of the hundreds, station themselves midway between that bunch and the main herd. The rest are then allowed to string through between them in single file or small bunches, and are counted as they run past. The other men hold the herd back close

together, so that none will run out behind the tally keepers, or crowd through too rapidly to be counted. It seems easy, but requires a very cool head to keep accurate count and not get tangled up trying to go too fast. When a hundred head have passed, a pebble or match is dropped into the pocket and another hundred is begun.

We found we were somewhat over three hundred head out. Immediately Balch took four men from our outfit together with the cattlemen who had volunteered to help us cross the Blue Mountains and started back on the trail to find the strays. About five o'clock they returned and reported that they could find no cattle as far as they had gone, and had returned to get some grub and blankets and fresh horses. They had decided it would be necessary to go plumb across the mountains again before they could overtake them.

This was most disheartening for a starter, and I felt that my doll baby was certainly stuffed with sawdust. The plan was to start back that evening by the light of the moon. While the men rested and got their supper, Balch and I rode out to the herd to see how things were going.

All of a sudden one of the men called our

attention to a cloud of dust or smoke between us and the lowering sun to the west. At first we thought it was a dust whirlwind, which is a common sight on the prairie, but soon we distinguished something moving. We knew there was no herd coming behind us, so we galloped out to see what it could be. It was a bunch of cattle, but owing to the dust we could not see who was driving them. We soon rode up, and, to our surprise and joy, we saw our road brand (a 7 on the left hip) standing out in all its glory. Then—and this surprised us still more—we saw a little wizened-up man on a scrawny cayuse without a saddle weaving up and down behind them, and yelling at the top of his lungs.

“I jest picked up a few strays back thar in the mountains,” he shouted. “I was comin’ this yere way, and I thought I’d bring ’em along. I ’lowed mebby you’d have use fer ’em.”

We assured him that we did have use for them, and we felt like hugging him till we cracked every bone in his little dried-up body. He turned out to be a cook and had been hired by Rand, whom we had left in Walla-Walla, and been sent down to join us. He had missed the herd at Daly’s ranch and followed on.

Luckily most of the cattle that had straggled off the trail during the night drive had come back to it, as they could not travel in the brush. There was no grass for them, and they had started back like a procession for the nearest lunch counter. He met them and got them turned in our direction, and I presume they, having decided that luck was against them, faced about, and came along as meek as repentant schoolboy truants.

Our new cook was a character. Bob was the only name I knew him by, and his horse's name was also Bob. He was the best cook we ever had, and the hardest man to keep out of a fight. He did not weigh more than one hundred and twenty-five pounds, but was willing to tackle any man, no matter what his size. The only Brown was the first one to step on the tail of his coat, and a more disillusioned man than the foreman after the clouds rolled by it never was my pleasure to meet. It all happened the next morning.

Bob took charge of the kitchen as soon as he got his blanket unstrapped from his horse the night he got in, as Foss was a novice and glad to surrender the job. I saw from the way he took hold that we had a chef. He had his breakfast ready right on time, and everything

was hot and savory. Mr. Brown, in his capacity of foreman, undertook to take a short stroll about that time, just to let people know he could walk, I suppose. At all events, although in sight of camp and having been summoned several times, he did not come in until all hands were through and our new cook had begun to clean up. Bob had left a frying pan with some meat in it, however, near the fire, and also the coffee pot.

Mr. Brown finally came in and allowed that things were not hot and must be heated over again. In about two seconds the air was full of fried beef, coffee, and swear words, and Brown was apparently getting his brains beaten out with the frying pan and coffee pot, swung alternately like Indian clubs by the little cook. Brown stampeded, jumped his horse, and with threats of six-shooters, etc., lit out for the herd. The subject was an embarrassing one, and it was dropped, but little Bob was in charge of his department from that time until he left us.

We found we were less than a dozen head "shy," and as these were all accounted for later on, we got out of the Blue Mountains whole, with an experience that was worth many dollars to us.

One impression has always remained strong

in my mind which I must speak of before the Blue Mountains have shut off the horizon. From the time we first went into camp—some time early in May—until we struck Powder River, every morning I would instinctively turn toward the west to see if old Mt. Hood was in sight. It seems to me that hardly a day passed that I did not catch a glimpse of its snow-capped, cone-shaped summit, and it never seemed a bit farther off.

The last night we spent west of the mountains on the foothills, above Pilot Rock, I saw it as plainly as though it was but a few miles distant, and could distinguish the red light of the sun on the snow, yet we were then about one hundred and fifty miles distant as the crow flies.



CHAPTER XI

MORE INDIAN SCARES

NOTHING happened out of the ordinary from this on until we got into the vicinity of Baker City. This place at that time, was the largest town in eastern Oregon and had about two thousand inhabitants. I was not particularly interested in statistics at that time and don't think I informed myself. However, it was smaller than Walla-Walla, but built on the same plan—one main street with some stores and warehouses of quite respectable size. The Jews monopolized the trade. Schwabacher, as usual, kept the largest general store, a branch of the one in Walla-Walla. The only purchase I made there was a gallon of vinegar, for which I paid one dollar. After that I did not wonder at the size of the stores. In fact, I wondered why they were so small. It was the old story over again. It was not the vinegar that cost. It was the freight, as

the man said about the needles in the early California days.

While in town two government couriers came in with despatches from the seat of the Indian trouble to the Post Commander at Fort Walla-Walla. From them we got the first authentic news about the outbreak, and, although it lost nothing in the telling, it showed a most alarming state of affairs. The Bannocks and Shoshones had donned their war-paint, and left their reservation at Fort Hall. After killing several ranchmen, they had started for the Umatilla reservation to settle an old feud with that tribe, and incidentally kill, burn, and steal anything that came handy.

The Fort Hall reservation was about 290 miles southeast of us, directly in our road, and in fact, one of our objective points. The couriers had ridden their horses to a standstill and stopped only long enough to buy fresh ones. Those they left were fine looking animals, although in bad shape, but we bought the two for seventy dollars and got a bargain. One we named Victor. He turned out to be very fast for half a mile. The other I named Baker City, and he was the easiest saddle animal I ever backed. I bought

him for my private use and kept him until he died.

On my way back from Baker City occurred a little incident which illustrates how the simple farmer waited for the knowing cow-puncher and "did" him. I had bought in Oregon a black horse, standing about 14½ hands, which besides being a most intelligent animal, I firmly believed had unusual speed. I was very proud of Coalie, as I called him, and only rode him on occasions of ceremony, such as going into town. I also made spasmodic attempts at currying him down, although he usually took that particular time to roll in an alkali wallow. On this day I had him looking fairly well, and he had been rubbed down in the livery stable also, so that he really looked quite smart.

On my way to camp I was overtaken by a man riding a raw-boned critter, with dull-looking hair and a sleepy eye, and we jogged along together. I found that he was the toll-keeper on the bridge across the river. He admired my horse and casually asked me if we had anything in the bunch that could run a quarter of a mile. I modestly told him we had a few world-beaters. He said he had a horse that was capable of running a little,

and would like to arrange for a race. I figured that this was my chance to clean up a few dollars and make a reputation for Coalie.

Having made a date with him for the next day, I spent part of that evening in rubbing my pony's legs down so as to limber him. In short, I got busy. The next day I ran my race for \$20 and a saddle against \$50 in cash. I took one man along to see that we had a fair start. Well, I don't care to say now how badly I was beaten. Poor old Coalie was a dear friend and he is dead. I know he never mentioned the subject, so I wont.

I said nothing to the rest of the boys but I was "on," and when the herd passed over the bridge a few days later we had some more horse racing. I bet against my own outfit and got even. That old nag with a sleepy eye was a flyer for a quarter of a mile, and the bridge tender had him trained so that he never came in too far ahead. That would have discouraged the other men who had "race horses" and were ambitious to show them off. I believe he was a broken down track horse imported for the purpose of taking in the unwary, and he must have paid good dividends if his owner gathered in all the cow outfits as he did us. I should say



MY HORSE "COALEY"



that two hundred dollars was a conservative estimate of the amount his owner accepted from our boys.

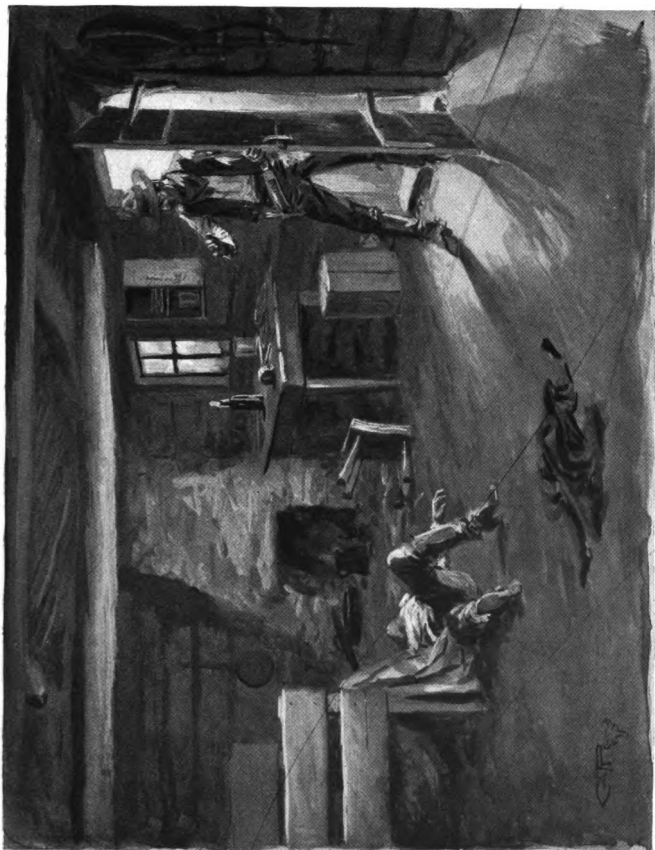
But the Indian outbreak soon drew our attention away from our losses in horse racing. Along the streams were scattered farms and ranches but they were often many miles apart, some of them being in the chrysalis state that I have already described—a wagon box for a house. When you got on the high land or benches, no habitation was in sight, and seemingly you had the whole world to yourself. In crossing from one stream to another we would come to some very rough hills or divides, and then it was always, unload the wagon and pack the stuff up the hill on our backs. Here is where our two thousand rounds of ammunition came in.

After we had travelled about a hundred miles from Baker City, we began to see signs of the Indian scare in the shape of deserted ranches. We also heard reports that the range horses had been driven off. The trail here ran parallel with the old stage road from Baker City to Boisé City and at one of the stations called the Express Ranch, we met an old ranchman, a Kentuckian, whose band of very fine bred mares had been taken by the marauders

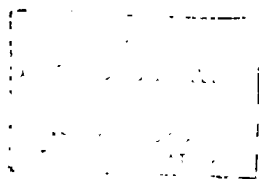
who had also shot and killed some of them out of pure wantonness.

Things began to look squally, and, to add to our troubles, one morning our own band of saddle horses was missing, and we found ourselves practically afoot. Nothing could be done until they were found, so mounting those that had been used on night herd, six of us started out in different directions. I got back about noon, empty-handed, but the horses had been found six or eight miles above us on the river by Mellick the horse wrangler.

Mellick also found more than he bargained for. He knew from the trail that the horses had gone up the river, and, leaving the rest of us to circle closer to camp, he made a straight line for the foothills. Seeing a ranch with an enclosed field he thought he would stop and inquire if anything had been seen of the band. No one was about, so he pushed open the door and found the owner on the floor dead, and scalped. The place belonged to the stage company, and was kept as a pasture for their worn-out or used-up stock, with a stock tender in charge. He had been killed the night before. If Mellick had not been a man of nerve, he would have made tracks for camp at once, but instead of doing so he took a look in the



SIGNS OF INDIANS



meadow. There he found our horses mixed in with the stage horses. The only explanation I can give is, that a small party of Indians travelling in a hurry to join the main tribe had run across our horses in the night, and not knowing they were ordinary cow ponies, attempted to take them along. In their flight they came to the ranch, found the stock-tender alone, killed him, and not wanting our plugs, left them and pulled out. We brought the poor chap's body down to the station, and the stage people took charge of it.

After that the men insisted upon being armed. We gave them each a rifle and a pocketful of cartridges. I must say it was a comfort to have a gun, even if you had an idea that it was as dangerous to you as to an Indian. Mine was a revolutionary-looking arm with a barrel about five feet long. It saved my life or nearly so, but not when in peril at the hands of Indians.

In order to carry our guns and not be hampered, we devised a sling to carry them across the front of the saddle. These were made by taking a piece of green—or fresh rawhide about eight inches wide and sixteen long, cutting a slit in either end, slipping one end over the horn of the saddle, and bringing it tight

around the stock of the rifle just over the lock. We slipped the other end also over the horn by means of the slit. When the rawhide became dry, it got stiff and assumed the shape of the gun. As you rode, therefore, your piece was in front of you, and, if needed, all you had to do was to draw it out through the sling.

The barrel of my weapon reached well down below my knee as I sat my horse. One day, while riding old Baker City and on reaching the top of a hill, I noticed that Bob who was about two miles ahead with the grub wagon, was taking the wrong trail. I started on a dead run down the hill, which was not stony, to overtake it. Suddenly I had a sensation as of something coming up behind me, and the next thing I knew I was pointing *up hill*, but still on my horse. Tumbles were very common occurrences, so I simply shook myself to find that I was not hurt, and loped on again.

After setting Bob right, I rode beside the wagon, when he called my attention to the barrel of my gun.

"You must be goin' to shoot around rocks at Siwash, ain't you?" he asked.

I looked and found that it was bent into almost a semicircle. As Baker fell—I presume he put his foot into a badger hole—the barrel

struck the ground, muzzle on. The rawhide sling held, and it simply lifted the weight of the horse over me as we made our summer-sault. I found I was covered with dust all up one leg and side to my shoulder. Had that gun not been there, I would have been shut up like a jack-knife and no ambulance in sight.

During the following six weeks, we saw—perhaps sometimes only thought we saw—quite a number of small bands of hostile Indians in the distance, and on several occasions found their moccasin trails in close proximity to our camp. They bothered us but once, and that was only as a feeler. I have always believed that we went unmolested because of the fact that we had nothing they wanted. They knew we were all armed and that some one was always on the alert, and if they attacked us, the chances were that some of them would get hurt. As one dead or wounded Indian, in their arithmetic, is only evened up by the death of several white men, they did not think the game worth the candle.

There is no doubt that they had us thoroughly sized up and had we given them a good chance they would have looted our wagon. This was proved by the fact of their having been so near our camps without being detected, but we

kept everything bunched together both day and night. Beside the men with the horses and cattle, we also had a camp guard. All this meant night work and a good deal of anxiety. I have heard of men who were not afraid of Indians, but so far have not had the pleasure of their acquaintance.

The work and anxiety finally convinced several of the men that they had important business in Baker City, so one morning, when about ten miles from the Express Ranch, where the stage stopped, five of them quit. There was nothing to be gained by argument, and it was agreed that they should ride to the Star Ranch and I should go back to Baker City and try to get men to take their places. I left camp with them, and after seeing that their horses were turned over to the stock-tender at the ranch, started on my fifty-mile ride to town.

I must confess it seemed a long and lonely ride, and I had all kinds of visions of Indians in the distance. I rode Coalie, and, although he had shown that he was not a race horse, I knew he had seventy-five miles in him if need be. I arrived in town about four in the afternoon, and slept that night in sheets for the first time in about two months. I also took occasion to get a hot bath, a shave, a hair-cut,

and shampoo, and the sensation of being clean once more was one not to be sneezed at.

I found three men that evening, and they found a fourth. I started them off on the stage in the morning, with directions how to find their horses and get to camp. Two of these men stayed through to the last. Having decided to wait over a day to let my horse rest, I took things easy. In the afternoon I noticed a team of little mouse-colored ponies, hitched to a buckboard, on which was a roll of blankets. I knew them at once as belonging to us, and sure enough out came the driver from a saloon. He was a short red-haired man with high shoulders, and, an unusual thing in that country, wore a narrow-brimmed felt hat.

"It seems to me I've seen this outfit before," I said, as I went up to the team.

"Maybe you have, and maybe you have n't," he said, eying me through his spectacles as suspiciously as I did him.

"I think they belong to me," I persisted, with a show of pugnacity in my tone.

"That just depends on whether you are a partner of Rand," said the man. "What's your name?"

I told him. Then it was all right. He told me his name was Flatteau, and I got his

autobiography in short order. He was a Swiss, a graduate of one of the Heidelberg Universities, and was as good a fellow as I ever met. He had invested all his money in a lumbering scheme up in Washington Territory and lost it. Wishing to get back East he had applied to Rand in Walla-Walla for a job, as a sort of bookkeeper and general utility man, and was taken on. He did not ask for wages, but we gave him a present when we reached the end of our journey. I don't know what became of him, but had he remained in the lumber business he no doubt would have made his fortune, as did many others who engaged in it. He was about two years ahead of the times, but in spite of his ill-fortune he foresaw the tremendous profits in the business when the question of transportation was solved, and he had it all figured out.

Flatteau and I immediately became friends, and I felt much easier in my mind to know I would have company on my trip back. He was chock full of news about the outbreak. There had been a big fight near Pilot Rock—our starting point—between the soldiers and the Umatilla Indians on one side, and the Bannock's and Shoshones on the other. The latter had been badly beaten, and were now

supposed to be broken up in small parties finding their way back to the neighborhood of Stein's Mountain in Idaho, where they expected to make another stand.

For the benefit of those who are not familiar with the habits and customs of the gentle savage, I would say that when a war-party splits up into little bands and travels through a country, it is as well to keep the children in after dark, and if you have any rich relatives living in the city, take that time to pay them a visit. The change is liable to be good for your health. These bands did a great deal of damage and killed quite a number of settlers before they were finally rounded up and returned to their reservations.

Early the next morning Flatteau and I struck the road and overtook the herd on Willow Creek, about twenty miles beyond where I had left them. I remember we drove through Burnt River Cañon, where the Oregon Short Line now runs. I believe it was the scene the following year of quite a battle between surveying parties sent out by the U. P. and the O. R. & N. railroads. It is a natural pass, and the only one in that section through a long range of hills, and was therefore very desirable.

CHAPTER XII

DEATH

FINALLY we came down on Willow Creek, a fair-sized stream running in a southeasterly direction through a wide bottom and emptying into the Malheur River (pronounced Malhu). Here we had our first tragedy, with a befitting stage setting.

For a week or ten days we had come along without seeing any signs of habitation, but we found Willow Creek bordered by hay meadows. It was only sixty or seventy miles from Boise City, Idaho, and the country was fairly well settled up. We encountered signs, however, that the ranchers had all deserted their homes and fled to the city for protection. The panic was complete, judging from what we saw. In one house we found the food still on the kitchen stove; sucking calves had been left tied up in the corral and horses in the barns. One woman had dropped her sewing

in the middle of the floor, and some had even left the washing hanging on the line.

The first ranch we struck was one of some pretension,—with a big hay meadow and the grass still uncut, although it was the height of the haying season. Here we found everything as the fugitives left it—bed clothes, provisions, everything. And it was lucky we did, as we had use for everything all at once.

In the outfit was a young man named Harris, the son of a well-to-do farmer back in Iowa, who had gone out to the Coast in search of adventure. I had noticed him particularly, as he was always willing and good-natured, no matter what the stress of weather or amount of work; moreover, his appearance was in his favor, and one of his shining virtues was that he always was gentle with his horses.

About three days before we arrived at the ranch at Willow Creek, he had come to me and complained of a pain in his right side. He said he thought he had strained himself dodging the limb of a tree while chasing a steer that broke from the bunch while passing through a small patch of timber.

We had made no provision in the medicine line outside of horse liniment and some blue stone in crystals, which was used for cauterizing

sore-backed horses. For this reason I had nothing to give him but advice, which was to bathe the seat of pain in cold water whenever he got a chance.

I discovered that evening that Foss had some pills, but what was in them he did not know,—nor did I,—but he said that he had had a similar pain, and that they had benefited him. I also prescribed a rub with the horse liniment. It happened to be Harris's turn to go on first relief with the herd that night, and as he complained no more, he was told to catch up his horse and go out. About an hour or so afterwards he rode into camp and woke me up, saying he was in great pain, and asked if some one would take his watch. I told him to turn in and I went out.

The next morning he was worse, and, as I knew he was not a shirker, I told him he had better keep quiet and ride in the buckboard with Flatteau. It was a hard day's drive, and I never thought more about him until one of the boys came to me about noon and told me Harris—or Billy, as we called him—was in a bad way, and he was for a fact. Poor chap, he did his best to brace up, and how he stood the next twenty-four hours I don't know.

At all events, when we got to the ranch he

told me he could go no farther, as the jolting of the buckboard was more than he could stand. We, therefore, decided to take possession, and, upon finding that there was a comfortable bed all ready, we made him lie down. Some one suggested that hot cloths might help, so we heated water and applied them. Although performing our offices with the best of intentions, I suppose we tortured him beyond endurance. He would groan if the coverings were touched, and howled when we applied the hot towels, although the treatment did seem to give him some relief. We had no idea of the nature of Harris's ailment, and expected every hour to see some improvement. Finally he began to get delirious.

While we were having a consultation as to what could be done, we saw a cloud of dust to the east which meant that something was coming from that direction, and of course, we immediately decided it was Indians. Our anxiety was soon relieved by the sight of a United States Army wagon with four mules, followed by a column of cavalry and an ambulance in the rear. It was a frightfully hot day, and the dust was six inches deep on the trail. We went to meet them and found them to be two troops of the 1st United States Cavalry.

They were making a forced march to reinforce General Burnard's command at Stein's Mountain, where the main body of the hostile Indians was supposed to be gathering.

The men and horses were very soft, as they had been in garrison for a long time, and the men were showing the effect of the heat. One gray-haired officer and about ten men were in a state of collapse, although I had reason to believe that some of the soldiers were shamming a bit.

I saw a trooper who was apparently very much overcome lying on the grass, grunting like a pig. The hospital attendant came along with a keg and a tin cup, and holding up the sufferer's head he gave him a drink of whiskey or brandy. At all events, the sick man's swallowing machinery was all right, for he never gurgled until the cup was empty. I was looking at him at the time, and as the attendant turned away he gave me a wink that explained the situation to his and my satisfaction.

They had a doctor with them, and as soon as he had attended to his own men I asked him to see Harris. He only took a glance and asked a question or two, and then motioned me to follow him out of the room. The

verdict was that he was beyond all medical aid, and could not possibly last more than a day. The doctor also said that he was in terrible agony, and the only thing he could do was to give him something to ease the pain.

"You really think there is no hope, doctor?" I asked.

"None whatever," was the reply. "An operation might have saved him, although I doubt it, but it is too late now. It is a baffling case of inflammation of the bowels, and our profession has never been able to cope with it satisfactorily, especially when the pain is in the lower right side."

As I look back on that pathetic scene in the light of subsequent medical discoveries, I do not wonder that the army surgeon held forth no encouragement. The malady by which Harris was stricken was undoubtedly appendicitis. When I think of how I advised horse liniment and pills of an unknown character, the surprise is not that the illness had a fatal termination, but that the patient lasted so long.

The doctor measured out some powder which I suppose was morphine, with directions to give it until the pain abated, but putting no restrictions on the amount. The first dose he

administered himself, and in a short time Billy seemed to feel better.

Soon other troubles were added to our list. The grass on the trail had been cropped so close that we could not hold the cattle near, and we had to drive them up into the hills. The horses fared better, as we turned them into the pasture where they got more grass than they had seen for months. While we were busy with poor Harris, we received orders from the officer in command to take our hard-ridden ponies out of the field, in order that the government horses might be turned in. I thought this was a little too much. Their horses were so fat that they were in a lather of sweat, and we found that on the march the troopers had been riding forty minutes and walking twenty in order to save their mounts. I went to the officer in command and told him who I was, and that my brother was an army officer. He finally relented, and told us we could put them back that night.

As soon as that was settled, I went to Harris and found him perfectly rational and not suffering much. As delicately as I could I told him that the jig was up, that it was only a question of hours as to how long he would live. I asked him to tell me where his family

lived, and told him that I would see that any message he left was delivered.

A pluckier boy never lived. Not a whimper escaped him against the cruel fate that was so soon to cut short his life.

"I can't tell you how sorry I am to have caused all this trouble and delay," he began. "You would have been able to get out of here if it had n't been for me."

"Don't mind that," I said with the diffidence any man would feel under the circumstances. "It did n't hurt us to stop. The horses needed a rest."

"I hope my groans and yelps have n't kept the boys awake," he went on. "But to save my life I could n't keep them from coming out."

He told me his father's name and address and I promised him faithfully that we would send his body home. It was the first conversation of this kind that I had ever held and it made a deep impression. There was nothing tragic about it. He took it all as though we were parting for a trip and he was merely getting his instructions. The effect of the drug began to wear off an hour or so afterward, and we gave him some more.

About four in the afternoon a courier rode

up to the ranch. Immediately the soldiers got busy, and in another hour we had the pleasure of seeing them disappear over the hills, going south, and we had the place to ourselves.

We gave Harris the rest of the powder during the night. He died about sunrise, but he had been out of pain and unconscious several hours before his life flickered out. The weather as I have said was very hot, and the body began to turn black almost immediately. We dug a grave for him in the corner of the beautiful mountain meadow. Breakfast was a solemn meal that morning and it was eaten in silence. After it was over we wrapped the body of our old companion in his blanket—the shroud and the coffin alike of the cowboy.

The burial was a simple ceremony. In fact there was no ceremony about it. Foss had left us at Baker City, and none among the rest of us knew any suitable prayers. We stood in silence about the open grave and thought pretty hard for a few minutes before we lowered the body into the ground. There were wet eyes and twitching of lips as the red clods began to fall on the blanketed form. But it was too grewsome to bid our friend an absolutely mute farewell. One of the cowboys

spoke up, and in a tone of consummate reverence said :

“Well, Billy was a damn good fellow, an’ I hate to see him go.”

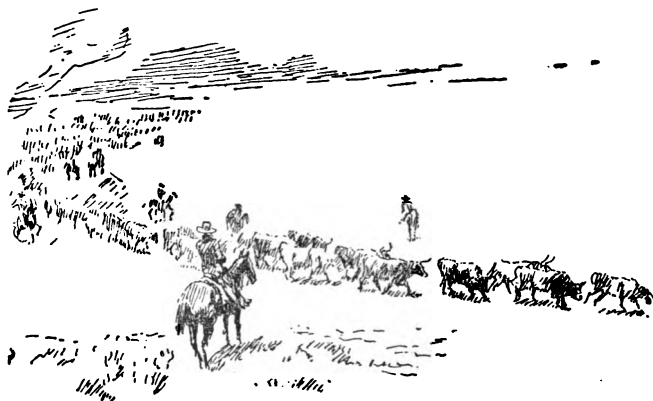
“Maybe it’s for the best, after all,” said Mellick, the horse wrangler. “Anyhow, he won’t have to do any more night herding.”

Roughly and crudely expressed as this last sentiment was, nothing could have conveyed more forcibly to our minds the world-old view that death means rest and peace. Mellick’s remark seemed to relieve the tension, but I noticed, for a part of the day at least, there was less swearing than usual.

We got a lot of rocks together and piled them on top of the grave to serve not only as a monument, but also to keep the coyotes from digging up the body. We put a board up with his name and date of his death burnt on it with a branding iron, and went back to the herd.

The scene comes back to me now, and I wonder that at the time it did not affect me more. But we were living a hard life and our sensibilities were dulled by it. Besides, we had the anxiety of the business and all this delay had been irritating. If I had any sensation it was that of relief that the whole thing was ended.

Later, when we got to Boisé, we had a lawyer draw up a set of resolutions which we all signed. These, with a letter describing the manner of his death, without the harrowing details, were sent to Harris's family. We also made arrangements with an undertaker to request the people that owned the ranch to leave the body undisturbed until called for. The old father came to our ranch in Wyoming during the winter, as we sent him out to get the remains and take them home. We received a letter from his mother in which she told us that the people on the ranch had faithfully guarded the grave and had planted some vines and fenced it off from the rest of the field.



CHAPTER XIII

SWIMMING SNAKE RIVER

IMMEDIATELY after the funeral we broke camp and continued down Willow Creek, the general direction being southeasterly. Several days afterwards we came to what was called "The Stone House," so-called because it was built of stone and the only house of the kind in that country, outside of the towns. It was a square, unsightly looking edifice and we found it had been turned into a blockhouse to make a rendezvous for the ranchmen in that vicinity who had sent their families into town for safe keeping.

While there we were regaled with all sorts of Indian yarns, but by this time we were getting hardened and took them for what they were worth. In many cases I think they originated in the imagination of the narrators. One often reads of the heroic conduct of frontiersmen in time of danger, but I don't recollect

that this particular batch impressed me with their prowess. They did a large amount of talking as to what they would do in case the luckless Siwash came that way, but whether they ever carried out their threats, I don't know, as our business was urgent and we could not wait for the dénouement. The Malheur River flows into the Snake or, as Parkman calls it, the Oregon River—"Where rolls the Oregon," etc. During ten months of the year the Malheur is not much of a stream, but at this time, about July 1st, it was running bank full, owing to the melting snow far up in the mountains.

Where we struck it, there was a high bluff with a narrow trail leading down to the bank, and I remember that while trying to hold the bunch up to where the trail "took off" they began to "mill"—go round and round in a solid mass. I suddenly became aware that I was between a press of surging steers and the edge of the bluff, which, at this point, fell perpendicularly fifty or sixty feet to the river.

The cattle were crowding nearer and nearer to the edge in their blind efforts to get away from something, they knew not what, and I had only time to force my horse into their midst and go with them. It was like being in a whirlpool. I could see nothing for the dust

and expected every minute to have a horn thrust into my horse's side or my leg, but somehow I got out and gained the narrow path going down the cliff.

The cattle were thirsty and immediately took to the water, and as soon as the current carried them off their feet they swam for the opposite bank. It was our first attempt at swimming any stream and it was more by accident than design that we got started properly. But we got across all right and only lost a couple of head that were crowded over the edge where I had been.

The next evening we came to the western bank of the great Snake itself, and after one look we all came to the conclusion that we were in for the job of our lives. There was a ferry run by the old cable system, which means that a flat bottomed scow with a board on the upstream side is attached at either end to pulleys which run on a cable, stretched across from bank to bank. To start, it is only necessary to drop the board, slacken away the tackle that runs through the pulleys at the shore end of the boat, and the current does the rest. The river was very high and seemed full of whirls and eddies and was the color of mud and altogether looked very uninviting.

The ferry was owned by a man named McDowell and was named after him, and, I believe, is so called to this day. That night we interviewed him as to the chances of getting across with our lives, as the more we looked the more convinced we were that to swim the cattle was out of the question, and it was equally impractical to ferry them. He reassured us, however, and said that in the morning he would have some men, who had had experience, to help us, and, if we got a "good scald" on, we would be across in no time.

As the Scotchman said "I had me doubts," and all night I had visions of disaster. The river at this point was at least a quarter of a mile wide, but owing to the swift current it would be necessary for the herd to swim twice that far before they could reach the opposite bank. Snake River (sometimes called also the Shoshone) runs north and south at this part of its course. It heads in the Teton Mountains near the western boundary of Wyoming, flows south and then makes a great bend to the west, skirting the lava beds of Idaho, and then north around the upper end of the Blue Mountains, and then west again, emptying finally into the Columbia River in Washington, making a big pot-hook. I sup-

pose, roughly speaking, it is eight or nine hundred miles long.

In swimming cattle, one of the first things to guard against is having the sun shine in their eyes, as they will not swim against the glare. In other words, they will not go where they cannot see. It is also of the first importance to keep them away from water till they have a "ten thousand dollar thirst"; otherwise you cannot force them beyond the edge of the bank. A third and also a very important thing is to find a place where the banks shelve gradually and where there is a place on the opposite shore where the ground will allow them to clamber out.

The spot selected by McDowell was about three hundred yards above the ferry, the landing place being about the same distance or more below. We made all arrangements about ferrying our wagon and buckboard, and agreed to pay him one hundred and fifty dollars for the job. It is needless to say ferries paid dividends in that country in those days.

We held the herd out on grass, or rather sagebrush, as in that immediate neighborhood there was not grass enough to keep a Harlem goat in good temper, until about three o'clock in the afternoon. Then, in fear and trembling,

we let the leaders slowly down towards the river. As soon as they smelled the water they began to string out in a procession with a man on either side to "point" them. I rode ahead with Balch to see what McDowell had in store for us.

We found he had two small skiffs with two men in each, one at the oars and the other armed with two battered tin pans, one in each hand. What the deuce the tin pans were for we did not know, but we were too proud to ask. The skiffs were hidden under the bank in some brush, some distance below where the trail led down, and the men were crouching in the stern so as to be out of sight of the cattle.

The nearer the leaders of the herd came to the water, the more rapidly they moved until they broke into a clumsy trot down the incline and plunged into the water. They were so thirsty that the first to reach the river simply opened their mouths allowing the water actually to run down their throats. As soon as there were a couple of hundred head well in the stream, we had instructions to get behind them and howl like wild Indians. This we did, and as a result those in front were shoved into deep water and had to swim.

It was here that the gentlemen in the boats with the tin pans came into action. As soon as the animals found themselves swimming, they naturally tried to turn and get back to dry land, but they were met on the flank by the two boats, with a volley of oaths and clash of cymbals that was never beaten in the days of ancient Rome. To save the drums of their ears, and, no doubt, also to avoid listening to the lurid idioms that were hurled at them, they turned their noses toward the farther shore and struck out for dear life.

We on the western bank meantime had opened ranks and allowed the rest of the herd to gallop up to find out what the uproar was all about. The men in the rear worked like demons to keep the "drag" up to the main bunch.

Everything was working in great shape, when we saw, to our horror, the ferry-boat evidently stuck in midstream, while the long string of heads, looking like a big snake, was being swept directly down upon it. It seems that the ferry-man miscalculated the time we would take in getting started and was endeavoring to take two of our men across, in order to have them on the opposite bank by the time the head of the parade got there, for

the purpose of holding them in some sort of bounds after they had come out of the water.

Everybody on the boat seemed paralyzed with fright, as they realized that if that solid chain of steers ever struck the craft it was dollars to doughnuts that the cable would part and the scow upset. In this case it would be only a question of their ability to walk ashore on the backs of the swimming cattle. Some one came to his senses in time to let go of something, and the old scow started back to the western shore in time to avert the disaster.

My own fear at the time, I will confess, was not for the boat or the men, but for our property, as I knew that a large number of our precious cow-brutes would be drowned should there be a collision. The horse herd was brought down just behind the tail end of the drag and most of them also swam, but several decided that the ferry was safest, so we drove them there and all crossed together. One or two of the men put up some loud talk about trying to cross on their horses, but it did not take much persuasion to change their plans. The whole operation only took about three quarters of an hour, but it was all I wanted in the way of a soul stirring incident.

Our troubles, however, were not over for

that day or night, as we speedily discovered. The cattle had had nothing to eat, and the cold plunge had stimulated their appetites. There was little or no feed in the country as far as I could see, and the consequence was that all hands rode hard all night trying to hold them together.

We had landed in a country that must have resembled Egypt the morning after it had been visited by the plague of locusts. In fact, the plague was there in the shape of thousands of rabbits and black beetles. These beasts and insects had appeared about a month previous in perfect swarms and were eating the country as bare as a board. They spared nothing that was green, not even sagebrush.

The rabbits were a species of Jack, brown in color, gaunt from hunger, and looked as though they had been pulled through a knot-hole. Like the locusts and grasshopper, they moved as an army from north to south. The width of the column was about forty miles, so I was told, and I believe it. The destruction became so alarming that the county offered a bounty of four cents a scalp, in order to have them exterminated by the settlers.

I heard a lot about this massacre of the innocents afterwards, and although some

allowance must be made for figures in a country where there are so many acres to the mile, still I have reason to believe the tales were not very far from the truth. It was no trick at all for a man with a double-barrelled shotgun to make four dollars a day, and one enterprising farmer near Boisé City built a runway with brush, which ended in a big hole. He then organized a rabbit drive which resulted in his killing ten thousand, thereby earning four hundred dollars at one clip. I know for a fact that the payment of the warrants, issued for that purpose, nearly put that county into bankruptcy. The pest finally disappeared, no one knew how or why. One theory was that in their southward journey they brought up in the lava beds and just naturally starved to death during the winter.

In spite of unceasing efforts to hold the bunch together, daylight found us in a very demoralized condition. We got them strung out after a bit and soon struck and crossed the Boisé River, which flows in from the eastward. By keeping well off the trail we succeeded in getting fairly good grass.

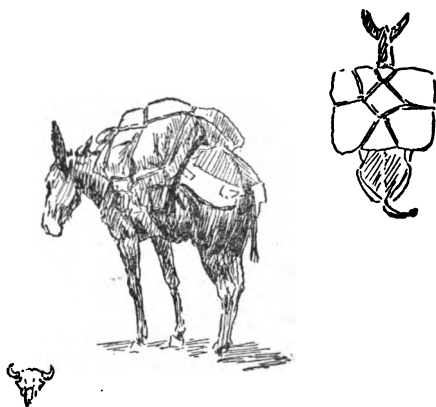
We followed on up the river and arrived at Boisé City on the 4th of July. There had been signs of dissatisfaction among the men

for several days, and we found that Brown had been trying to persuade the hands to strike for higher wages, claiming as a reason for the raise, that they were in danger of their lives from the Indians, and that they could get higher wages by hiring out to the Government as mule skimmers and pack-train men. The trouble culminated when we got within walking distance of the town. Then the disgruntled ones made their demands, which we promptly refused. As we owned the horses and saddles, there was nothing left for them to do but shoulder their blankets and hit the trail for Boisé City. I think six, including Brown, left.

I was delegated to go in and hire more men. I found the place *en fête*, but did not have time to join in the celebration. The town made a favorable impression and I there saw a system of irrigation, which was new to me. A great many of the houses were surrounded by gardens with fruit trees, and in order to get the water from the main ditches that flowed down on either side of the streets, there were erected what looked like mill wheels. The buckets consisted of tin lard cans capable of holding about three or four gallons of water, and as the wheel turned with the power of the

current the cups were filled and in descending emptied their contents into a wooden trough leading into the enclosure. To see a double line of these wheels all revolving at the same speed was very odd.

The place seemed prosperous and contained probably two thousand people. There were quite a number of very homelike looking houses and I felt at the time that it would be a very pleasant thing to stop right there and spend the rest of the summer. During all the past month I had been anything but well, and on weighing myself at a store I found I tipped the beam at 118 pounds, which was pretty slim for a man five feet nine in his boots.



CHAPTER XIV

A TASTE OF HARDSHIP

THERE was no difficulty in getting men at Boisé City, and the next day we moved on with our full complement. Some one told us that by keeping well off to the south we should find good feed and water, so we swung down, with the intention of striking Indian Creek well up above its mouth. Our information was that by making a dry camp and driving about twenty miles we should bring up in a section of country that had not been visited by the rabbits and beetles. We watered the herd in the evening at an irrigating ditch and drove out about five miles for camp. The next morning we started on the long pull.

About three o'clock that afternoon I started ahead to hunt the water, but after riding for several hours, I came to the creek bottom, only to find it as dry as a bone. First, I explored down the course of the bed, but after going for

an hour gave that up and retraced my steps. By this time I was getting thirsty enough to drink vinegar, but still no water in sight. I kept on in sheer desperation, as I knew there was nothing behind me. My tongue began to feel like a piece of wood and for a while things looked red, and I had a consuming desire to take off my clothes as I seemed to be burning up. You must remember that it was boiling hot, and I had been without a drop of water since daylight with the dust from the cattle almost chokingly thick at times. My horse was getting weak also and began to stumble.

It was nearly sunset when suddenly he seemed to take on new life, and shortly afterwards I saw a bunch of willows about a mile away; they promised something, so I pointed in that direction. I shall never forget my sensation when I saw the wheels of the buckboard, and there, lying at his ease in the shade of the brush, the one and only Flatteau, perfectly composed and reading a book. My poor horse made a rush for a puddle and I half fell off and made for where I saw a bucket with a cup hanging to it.

Flatteau noticed that something was wrong, but I could not have spoken if my life had de-

pended on it. The memory of the first taste of that liquid, which was almost ice cold, remains with me to-day. I did not discover until I had swallowed quite a lot of it that it was really lemonade. By some lucky chance Flatteau had taken a wrong trail and had found this spring ; he also discovered that there was water in the creek in holes a little farther up and had therefore decided to camp and wait for the herd to turn up. He had brought with him from Walla-Walla some cans of portable lemonade for just such an occasion. Portable lemonade consists of a tin containing sugar and a small bottle of citric acid ; by emptying the whole business into half a pail of water a palatable drink is produced ready for instant use. Why I did not die on the spot of gastritis or something equally violent, I don't know, for I think I must have poured two or three gallons of water down my throat before I could quench my thirst. Death from thirst must be a very painful method of leaving this earth, judging from my short experience.

For about a week after this we had our hands full, as for some unknown reason the herd took to stampeding almost every night. They would not run far, but that did not obviate the necessity of turning out at all times

of night, and tearing off to help stop them or bring them back.

A stampede at night is generally plumb full of incident. In the first place, it is always in the nature of a surprise party. Everything is quiet; suddenly a bawl is heard, and then the earth trembles and you hear the clash of the horns as they strike each other in the mad rush. There is no way of knowing the direction the brutes are going, unless they come your way, or you hear the shout of some other fellow above the bellowing of the cattle as he tears after what he thinks is the head of the band.

What the nature of the country is, you have no time to consider. You go. If you stop, may the Lord help you! If you look down or think of the holes, just that minute you make a mistake.

I don't believe any one can give a description of a night stampede and do it justice, and, to a city bred man, it would convey no picture, unless he happened to have had experience in the rush line of a football game, and then only a limited idea can be gained.

The horse is the main feature of the entertainment; he is the star, and with him rests the success or failure of the performance. If

his eyes are bad or his corns hurt, you are out of luck and you had better find some quiet spot and wait for daylight. Distances are deceptive, as are elevations and depressions : you think you are about to climb something, and instead you go sliding down a hill ; everything and everybody are making a noise except the sure-footed, devoted little brute underneath you, and small thanks he gets for standing between you and kingdom come.

This stampeding got so bad that we finally decided not to bed the herd at all at night. The men were getting so worn out from want of sleep that it was a question how long we should last.

One night I rode in to wake up the relief, and the scene was so weird that I have a most vivid recollection of it. It was moonlight, although the sky was overcast, and the men had thrown down their blankets wherever it was most handy, but it so happened they were lying in a semblance of a circle. They had their guns on the ground near them, and, as it was warm, few of them had rolled themselves in their blankets in the usual fashion.

Owing to the strain of body and mind they had endured, none were sleeping quietly. One was sitting up, although sound asleep. Another

would groan and toss, and others swear and yell, dreaming, I suppose, that they were heading a run. It looked as though there had been a battle, and these were wounded men left on the field—the firearms added to the illusion. To illustrate how the mind is always on the alert under the strain of a cattle drive, I can state that I have often been waked from a sound sleep by a man hailing for help, although at a distance of a mile.

By this time we had left all habitations behind and were on what is called "Little Camas Prairie." It was near here that the Indian outbreak first started. A half-breed boy that had been adopted by a white man named Frank Robinson suddenly ran amuck and killed his companion, a cowboy. He then skipped for the reservation, and when they tried to arrest him the trouble began. I suppose they made that an excuse, as without doubt they had been planning for the campaign for some time.

As far as feed and water conditions were concerned, things began to improve, and when we struck the headwaters of Camas Creek and reached Big Camas we were in a paradise for cattle. The stream runs almost due east through a wide prairie at a distance of from

five to ten miles south of the foothills of the Salmon River Mountains. About every four or five miles a small mountain stream flows in from the north, and the grass was knee deep. Under these circumstances, we decided that this was the place to call a halt and give all hands a chance to rest and fill up. We had been pestered at times by the ranchmen and settlers, who accused us of trying to drive off some of their stock, but, owing to their fear of the Indians, they had gradually dropped astern, and we were monarchs of all we surveyed.

If it had not been for the anxiety we felt lest some wandering band of savages should swoop down on us, I think the time we spent loitering through that stretch of country would have been absolute enjoyment. As soon as the cattle got thoroughly stuffed with grass they became as quiet as a lot of old milk cows. About dark we would ride around the outside of them to bring them to a convenient distance from camp, and then one man would stand watch at a time. The horses needed no attention, and although at first we kept a man alive in camp, we soon did away with that.

The brooks were full of trout, and we also found lots of squab sage hens. These we

would chase on foot and kill with sticks, so that our larder was well supplied. The change from salt bacon, dried apples, bread, and coffee was most welcome. We had no fish-lines, so had to resort to all kinds of methods to catch the fish. One very successful way was to have one man ride up the creek so as to muddy the water, and another follow him up wading, and, as the trout rose to the top, he would scoop them out on the bank with his hat. This may seem improbable, but I will vouch for the truth of it.

We also discovered that there were large droves of wild hogs roaming about. These were evidently the progeny of the domestic breed that had escaped from some ranchman or emigrant. They live on the root of the Camas plant, which somewhat resembles an oyster plant in looks but not to the taste. It is considered good food by the Indians, but was a little too pungent for our palates. We killed several of the hogs, but, on cooking them, found the flesh so strongly impregnated with the flavor of the root that no one could eat it.

It was during this loafing spell that I read *Lucille*, by Owen Meredith, between naps. When everything had been attended to, I

would find a shady spot under some willow brush near a stream, and then forget cattle, Indians, and hardships, and be transported for the time. I don't know where the volume came from, but I think Flatteau owned it. At all events it was the only book in the outfit and it was a godsend to me while it lasted.

Although comparatively idle, we found lots to do, however, as this was our chance to doctor our crippled cattle and soreback horses.

To me the most distressing part of trail work is to be obliged to pound cripples along, and to see saddles thrown on to horses with sore backs. Both, however, are unavoidable. Some men, especially if they are not good horsemen, will raise a lump on a horse in a day, and that, of course, means a boil and a sore.

What are called kidney sores are the commonest and hardest to heal. The surgery is very crude, but sometimes effective. The main thing is to keep the proud flesh from forming, and for that reason we used to cauterize the place with blue stone and then apply some ointment, or, failing that, wagon grease.

The crippled cattle were, of course, much more numerous, but they were easier to cure.

The treatment was most painful, but it certainly "put the kibosh" on sore feet. The chief cause of lameness is from bruising the feet between the dew-claws on sharp stones. This is very liable to happen during a stampede or while driving over stony ground, and, of course, the bigger and heavier the steer, the worse the bruise. First the hoof begins to swell, then the leg, until it becomes almost twice its natural size. If nothing is done, the shell of the hoof drops off, and that, of course, finishes the animal. In other words the hoof suppurates and sloughs off.

Our remedy was first to throw and tie the patient, and then take a piece of new rope about an inch in diameter and draw it swiftly to and fro between the claws until all the decayed flesh and putrid matter had been torn out. We then poured a solution of blue vitriol into the wound and on top of that hot tar, the latter being used to keep out the air and dirt. It was surprising to see how quickly the swelling would subside and the animal begin to put its foot on the ground. We must have treated a hundred head or more at this time, and I don't think we lost one.

We had a big dun-colored muley, or hornless steer, about six years old, that towered

above the whole band. We had named him Mount Hood, and the old fellow was always well up in the van. One day he went lame and grew rapidly worse, and for two weeks he hobbled along on three legs. We thought surely we should have to leave him, but this treatment cured him, and he lived to get to Chicago a year and a half later, at a weight of 2900 pounds, after being fed on corn in Nebraska.

All things have an end, good or bad; although reluctant to leave this happy hunting ground, we had to push on, as it was nearly the first of August and we were hardly half way on our journey, and the worst of the road lay ahead. We crossed Wood River, where the town of Bellevue, Idaho, now is, and I think we met the man who afterwards founded the town, right there at the crossing. He was an Irishman, named Kennedy, who, with his wife, was seeking a new home, and had got that far when his team of horses left him one night for parts unknown, and there he was, like Micawber, waiting for something to turn up. He had taken the wagon box off the hounds and had made himself as comfortable as circumstances would permit. Before we got there he had done considerable tramping about trying to find his horses, and had decided that the

country, although a little way from the Bowery, still had its advantages, especially as a summer resort, and would make a pleasant home for himself and wife. We traded a horse for a bag of corn-meal and a saddle for some sugar. This transaction, I believe, was the beginning of his fortune. He afterwards, I heard, took up some land that he turned into corner lots in the town of Bellevue, and got into some mines that made him a very rich man.



CHAPTER XV

SKIRTING THE LAVA BEDS

WE now came to the northern border of what is known as the lava beds. These formations, I think, deserve a description, as I believe few people are aware of their extent and nature. They lie in the southeastern part of Idaho and cover a territory about 140 miles long, east and west, 70 miles north and south, forming almost a parallelogram. The Snake River flows around them on the east, south, and southwest and the Salmon River Mountains bound them on the north. In the centre of what looks like a dead level plain, rise three buttes, which are visible from any point around the edge.

The color of the lava on bright days is a gray black, but in cloudy weather it looks as black as a pall. There are no streams flowing through the waste, and the only water that is known to exist within its border, except

perhaps to the Indians, is a spring at the foot of one of the three buttes. The formation is like that of a glacier with deep crevasses and jagged points. Nothing grows in them except a stunted pine, although I believe grass is found in some of the shallow rifts.

There may be trails through them, but if so, they are known to few and it would take a brave man, or an outlaw, to penetrate far from their outskirts.

There is, however, a short cut wide enough for a stage road which goes diagonally through from the north at a point near Lost River, coming out opposite what is now the town of Blackfoot on the south. It is about fifty miles long and runs near the butte at which is located the spring.

In those days, before the railroads came through, one of the new stage lines to Oregon ran through here and had a relay station at the spring. General Sheridan, I believe, tells of seeing the following inscription over the ranch door: "Forty miles from hay and grain. Twenty miles from water. Two inches from Hell. 'God bless our home.'"

I don't know what the geological explanation is, but to the laymen it looks as though a big mountain had melted and run down like a

mould of ice-cream. They say that the three buttes are extinct volcanoes, and that may be so, as I have seen, further on, mounds with deep cut-like centres which may have been at one time craters. We had no difficulty about water, as there were innumerable creeks coming down from the hills.

About half-way along in our journey around the lava beds we come to what is called Lost River. Its real name is Godin's River. It carries quite a volume of water and is very swift two or three miles above where it strikes the lava. Here it broadens out into a lake, which has no visible outlet. From this it gets its name. It, of course, flows through some subterranean channel and probably empties into the Snake on the other side of the desert.

Balch and I made a trip half-way across by the stage road, in order to determine if it was possible to drive the herd that way and thereby save quite a long distance around. We heard that some one had taken their cattle through, but before we got back we were satisfied that if they got some through, they left a number behind.

We left camp just at dusk (with a pack-horse to carry our blankets and grub), for the

reasons that it was much cooler to travel by night and we had a full moon to light our way. Besides, we thought that we would be less likely to attract the attention of any band of hostiles who might be lurking about. We had seen their signal fires at intervals for a week past and felt sure that there was something doing. We chose our best horses and took along a supply of ammunition, and felt we had more than an even chance to pull through all right.

It was in August, and there had been no rain to amount to anything for some months, so that the road was frightfully dusty. At night, however, in these altitudes, there is always a heavy dew, which keeps the dust from rising in clouds as it does in the day time. No one who has not experienced alkali can form an idea of its penetrating quality. It has an acrid smell and seems to dry up the mucous membrane of the nose and throat. It feels as though you had a bad cold in the head, and your eyes burn and smart as though you had put salt in them.

With a long ride like this ahead, it is generally the rule to walk your horse about two thirds the time, and lope the other third. In this way you get over the ground and do not exhaust the animal. Almost immediately after

we got into the lava beds we found the signs of the disaster which had overtaken the other herd in the shape of dead cattle. We tried to keep count of carcasses, but soon gave it up. The stench from the carrion was terrible, and the whole scene was depressing and terror inspiring.

In places the lava rose in a solid wall high above our heads on either side, so that all we could see was the white trail stretching ahead. To add to the uncomfortable feeling we—or at least I—imagined that things moved about us. At times we both would come to a sudden halt and cock our guns, which we carried loose across our knees, only, however, to see a couple of coyotes skulking away from a disturbed banquet.

This happened frequently and then we would hear the brutes yelping. The coyote cry is a beastly sound, even when heard in the security of a good stout log cabin ; but it has a blood-curdling effect on a moonlight night on the desert, in an Indian country. For a hair raiser it beats any quartet I ever heard in an opera.

About three in the morning we reached the stage ranch, which we found deserted. We had counted on finding some hay for our horses, but nothing had been left. We gave

our horses a feed of bread, of which we had quite a supply, watered them, and decided that we had seen all that was necessary. After unsaddling and resting for about two hours, we struck the back trail just about sunrise. I think this was the hardest ride I ever had. What with the sun, the dust, and the stench, the horses getting weary, and the fact that we had not really had a square meal, as we cooked nothing during our stop, the miles seemed unending. We kept up, however, and got back to camp about one o'clock. As the herd was not going to move again that day, we turned in and slept the rest of the afternoon.

We here met with the misfortune of losing our cook, Bob. I don't know to this day what struck him, but that evening after supper he appeared, leading his little pony, with his blankets tied on its back—he had no saddle or bridle—and informed me he had decided to quit. As I had no hold on him and he had his own horse, there was nothing to be done but let him go. I argued with him but to no avail, and finally told him that if he got through to Wyoming that fall and wanted a job cooking through the winter, I would like to have him.

On a fly leaf of my *Lucille* I wrote the name of our firm and our post-office address and gave

it to him. I also offered him a rifle and ammunition, but he said he did not care to be bothered, and if any damned Indian could catch him they were welcome. I gave him directions about the short cut through the lava, and without a word of good-by, he jumped on his horse and disappeared in a cloud of dust in the direction from which we had come that morning.

That was the last I ever saw of him, although I heard from him, or rather of him, twice afterwards. The first time was about a month later, when we reached the Blackfoot ferry. He had come through that far all right, but had drowned his horse trying to swim the river.

The next time was about a year afterwards. I got a letter from the Sheriff of Sweetwater County, Wyoming, asking me if I knew anything of a man named Robert Arkwright. I answered that I knew no man of that name and was then informed that the skeleton of a man had been found by a cowboy lying among some big rocks near the Three Crossings of the Sweetwater River, and that although the coyotes had scattered his bones to some extent, they had not eaten all his clothes, and in the pocket of his coat they had found the leaf

from *Lucille* with our address. I could give them no information about the man, and the supposition was that either he had been murdered or else been struck by lightning; the latter I always thought was the case, as the rocks in that part had a good deal of mineral, which attracted the lightning. Bob, no doubt, had gone in among them to get shelter from a sudden storm, and it happened to be the wrong time. However, he was buried like a white man, without expense to his family.

With us the daily routine kept on about the same for a week or so, enlivened now and then by a stampede or the straying of some of the horses, when we had an experience most unforeseen. As a note of explanation, I must state that almost every man in the outfit was suffering more or less from inflammation of the eyes, caused by the glare of the sun and the alkali dust. Balch, in particular, was having a very severe time with what seemed to be an abscess at the corner of his left eye. It was necessary to bathe one's eyes for quite a while in the morning to get them really open, as the lids would swell up somewhat as they do when burnt by snow.

Although I was by no means as badly off as some, at the same time I had been bothered

for at least a month or six weeks with mine. One afternoon I had ridden ahead to look up the road and had climbed well up on the side of a hill so as to get as extended a view as possible. It was the middle of the afternoon, and as I looked off towards the south and over the lava desert, I noticed that it seemed blacker and more gloomy than usual, and there also seemed to be a hazy or smoky appearance in the atmosphere. The aspect of the sombre waste fascinated me from its very look of absolute desolation.

After satisfying myself as to the trail, I turned back, and, as I did so, I noticed a cloud of dust about where the herd should be, but supposed that they had perhaps had a little run, as often happens if the leaders are feeling pretty well. I jogged along, but for some reason I felt depressed. Suddenly there seemed to be a squall coming up, as the light had changed to that gloom which comes just before a thunderstorm.

I looked around the horizon and up towards the zenith, but there were no heavy clouds, although the sky was covered with light clouds such as one sees on a summer's day, and the sun was hidden at intervals. But the strange, uncanny feeling remained, and finally I began

to whistle and put my horse to a lope, with an undefinable longing to get near to the sight or sound of a human being.

Upon reaching the top of a divide, I looked out once more over the desert, and then at the sky. That settled my doubts. I was scared plumb through, and started for camp on the run. The alkali dust had done its work. I was going blind.

What my thoughts were for the next half-hour would make material for nightmares to last me the balance of my life. The first man I met was the horse herder, and with him his band of horses. He seemed to be trying to hold them up, but the devil was in them; they would do nothing except strike off on the run in detachable bunches. He shouted something to me, pointing to the sky, and seemed much excited.

Then the truth dawned upon me. It was an eclipse of the sun, total, where we were. Owing to the clouds, we did not get a view of it at the height, but it got so dark that the cattle refused to move and actually went into camp of their own accord, many of them lying down. The horses being more intelligent knew that something was wrong and showed it by their restlessness.

When a child I read a book called *Cast up by the Sea*, and in it there is a description of a total eclipse, showing the effect it had on the savages. This experience of being taken unawares and finding myself in a great show during the transformation scene, without having gone through the ceremony of buying a ticket, gave me somewhat the same kind of a sensation. It impressed itself forcibly also on most of the men, and I think the following anecdote will not come in amiss as an illustration of its effects.

Among the hands was a man called Bilious, to distinguish him from several other Bills. He was about six feet tall, very thin, and hailed from Arkansas. He had never seen a railway train, and the fastest time he had ever made was on the hurricane deck of a cayuse. Moreover, he was inordinately fond of horse racing and imagined every new mount he got was a race horse. It is needless to say that most of his wages went in backing his opinion of their speed. In the silence of that night, while we were on herd, Bilious came to me brim full of a desire to learn all about astronomy. As he explained it that particular branch of learning had been omitted in the schools of Arkansas. Not being afraid of

contradiction, I answered most of his questions with an airy confidence which I was far from feeling, but the information I gave seemed perfectly satisfactory to him. Finally he wanted to know about the revolutions of the earth. I told him that it had two, one around itself, and one around the sun, that each day it revolved around itself, and it took a year to go around the sun.

"How fur is it around the sun?" asked Bilious.

The annual route stumped me. However, I tried to compensate for this lack of information by telling him that the earth travelled twenty-five thousand miles every time it went around itself.

The astronomy "quiz" was interrupted about this time by a disturbance among the cattle, and we separated. About an hour later Bilious came jingling up, and when still some distance off he sang out:

"Do you mean we go twenty-five thousand miles in daylight?"

"No," I yelled back, "in twenty-four hours."

By this time we were both on the gallop. Then came back through the darkness:

"That 's more 'n a thousand miles an hour."

"Yes," I shouted.

As he disappeared entirely I heard him yell back:

"A thousand miles an hour ! By God, we 're dandies, ain't we ? Waough !"

It had just dawned on him that he was going fast. The yell at the end was similar to that used by some busters when a horse is bucking hard with them, and is expressive of pleasant exhilaration.

Before leaving these lava beds, I must relate one more incident, merely to show what imagination can do. The smell of Indians was always more or less with us, and any strange thing on the horizon was extremely liable to engage our earnest attention. One afternoon three of us had ridden ahead farther than usual, and it was getting dusk when we turned towards camp. My horse was a little lame, so I was some distance behind the other two and taking things easy. I saw them stop and point at something and gaze at it very intently. As I rode up one of the two said:

"Indians, by God."

Sure enough, about half a mile or so off, we saw four or five objects which looked like men on horses, and one of them seemed to be waving a blanket.

Our pause was the briefest. No one wanted

to be the first to skedaddle, so we started on a slow lope. But I noticed that the man on the best horse seemed to have a great deal of trouble holding him. Our pace gradually quickened and finally we dropped all semblance of decency, and each man spurred his brute to its utmost. As we neared the camp we began to cool off, and, strange to say, by silent consent we said nothing to the boys of what we had seen.

The next day, by sunlight, we discovered that our Indians were a clump of stunted trees, and the blanket effect was merely the swaying of the branches. Talk of fearless cow-punchers and there you have them !



CHAPTER XVI

SWIMMING SNAKE RIVER

WHAT was really beginning to worry us was the realization that we were running short of provisions and no corner grocery in sight. Sugar and salt had given out some time before, and our supply of flour was very low. Those who think that men driving cattle have beefsteak every day are very much off the key. In the first place, the cattle are not in condition to kill for beef ; secondly, they were worth too much money ; and thirdly, in that hot weather with no facilities for preserving it, meat would spoil in a day and have to be thrown away.

If there had been any fat range cattle and we had found a yearling or young heifer that had accidentally been driven into the herd and refused to leave it, we, of course, should have found it necessary to kill it rather than drive it off with our herd and thereby be considered in the light of thieves. And rather than see the

beef spoil, we, no doubt, should have taken some of it for food. But that did not happen to be the case and we were down to sow-belly, bread, and coffee straight.

We had a couple of sacks of corn-meal, so we could vary our fare with mush, but mush without salt or sugar is not really satisfying, although by pouring bacon grease on it, we made shift to get it down.

Sugar was the one thing we craved most, and happening to meet a government mule pack-train, we persuaded the man in charge to sell us ten pounds of brown sugar for which we paid him twenty dollars in gold. In spite of entreaties the boys raided that sugar so that in two days we were as badly off as ever.

I have seen men that might properly be called filthy, but those packers took the prize. There were between thirty and forty mules, and each one had from two hundred and fifty to three hundred pounds of salt bacon on his back. It was sewn up in canvas, but the heat of the sun had melted the fat so that it had soaked through the covering. The dust, of course, stuck wherever it settled, so there was a layer of about an inch over the whole pack.

In loading and unloading, the men had to lift the packs off, and you can therefore imagine

the state they were in. Anything dipped in butter and rolled in meal about gives you an idea of their appearance. It was wonderful to watch those brutes when loading time came. Each one knew his own pack and would walk up and stand waiting for his turn, and as soon as the last hitch was thrown and made fast he would trot off to where his own bell mare was standing. There are many stories told of the intelligence of these animals and incredible as they seem, many of them are true.

We put in about two weeks of solid discomfort; the heat and dust were terrible. It is not at all an uncommon thing for the thermometer to go as high as 105° to 110° during the month of August, along the bottom of upper Snake River, which we were now approaching.

The nature of the country now began to change and broaden out, and we felt as if we had more room to move about in. The lava was being left behind, and sagebrush prairies lay in front. Water was getting scarcer, and we found that we had a long dry stretch between us and the river, the only intervening oasis being Mud Lake, which we found to be very nearly dry, and farther on Market Lake, a body of water about two miles long and about half a mile wide.

We reached the first about four in the afternoon and let the cattle down to drink, first taking the precaution to fill the water barrel before they had stirred up the mud. As it was, the water was very bitter and warm. However, we decided to camp for the night and made our preparations, but we reckoned without our host. At sundown we received a visit from a swarm of mosquitoes that beat anything in that line I have ever seen—Jersey even, could not touch it. The cattle and horses walked off and left us, so we had to follow, but even this flight offered little relief. Each animal carried about ten thousand insects with it, and, for about two hours, or until the chill dew began to put them out of business, we did nothing but fight the insects with both hands. They got so unbearable that we took the black wagon grease from the wheels and smeared our faces and hands to keep them away. For three days they stayed with us, and at the end of that time we all looked as though we had mumps and smallpox combined. The glands in the neck swelled up, and, I believe, had the pest lasted, some of us would have become ill.

Just after leaving Market Lake we had our first close interview with a band of Bannocks.

They overtook us one afternoon rather unexpectedly. We learned afterwards that this party was one of many who were sneaking back to the reservation, owing to the fact that the war was over. Their chief, an Indian by the name of Eagan, had been inveigled into a trap by a Umatilla chief named Five Crows, and had been killed. That broke the back of the uprising, as Eagan was the ringleader in the whole business.

In this party there were about a dozen bucks, but, as far as we could see, they carried no arms, although it was a dead sure thing that their blankets covered their weapons. That night they camped only a little way from us, and we had a chance to see how their fire department worked. They lighted four fires to keep them warm and turned in about dusk.

It was a very still night and any sound travelled a long way. We did not trust the gentlemen implicitly, and thought it proper to put on a camp guard so as to be sure that none of our saddles would be missing in the morning. I took first guard and ensconced myself in the wagon, so that they could not see me and I would have a good chance to detect them if they tried any crawling game. I noticed that

at intervals some one of them would replenish the fires, but otherwise they were all as dead as mackerel.

At twelve I awoke a man named Hill, who had the reputation of being somewhat of a joker, and, after handing him the gun and ammunition, I got under the blankets as soon as possible. Mr. Hill, however, decided to have his little fun, and some time in the night discharged his piece in the air. Naturally, we all jumped to our feet, expecting all sorts of things, but the only thing we saw was the four fires go out as though they had fallen through the ground. The sound of the shot had hardly died before their camp was as black as your hat. How they did it I don't know, but I suppose they smothered them with their blankets.

When daylight came they were gone, but I can swear I did not hear a sound, nor did any one else. This is an illustration of Indian stealth. I believe that had they wanted anything in our shop they would have got it, guard or no guard.

Before we reached their reservation at Fort Hall we had visits from several more bands of the same kind, but the only trouble they gave us was loitering about the wagon whenever they got a chance, and always begging for

something. They would gather the coffee grounds thrown out after each meal and put them in their filthy handkerchiefs to be boiled again for their own use.

We struck the river and the main travelled stage and freight road to Montana at the same time, and here, for the first time in a month, we began to meet white people in the shape of bull whackers and mule skimmers, with their freight trains. At that time every pound of freight that went into Montana from the south was hauled there by teams along this road,—provisions, mining machinery, everything,—so although not quite as crowded as Broadway, it was a pretty busy thoroughfare. There were also daily mail stages each way, and we found we could post a letter, which seemed quite civilized. We met one eight mule team stuck in a mud-hole, and, after giving them assistance, we found that the cargo consisted of dynamite. We immediately found our business was pressing in an opposite direction.

One thing that cheered us was that we knew that at Taylor's or Eagle Rock Bridge, a few days' journey below, we should find a store and be able to replenish our stock of provisions. I assure you that mush three times a day may be all very well for chickens, but for

healthy men, riding twelve and fourteen hours out of every twenty-four, it is not a nourishing diet.

Taylor's Bridge is where the Utah Northern Railroad now crosses, and it must have been a mine of wealth to the owners. The river narrows at this point, and in the middle a natural stone pier rises from its bed, so that the two spans are not much more than thirty yards long. The road comes up the river on the east side until it gets there and then follows up on the west bank.

Everything, therefore, that could not swim had to pay toll to cross, and that meant a great many dollars. There was no way of getting out of it. The proprietors of the bridge were monopolists of the worst kind. It was owned at that time by a family named Taylor, who inherited it from their father. But the king on the throne was a man named Jack Anderson. He was about fifty years old and fine looking, with a long gray beard which reached almost to his waist. The settlement consisted of the store, a blacksmith shop, and the house the Taylors lived in. They owned all the land about the bridge and did not care to have neighbors.

After buying our bill of groceries we were

treated to some bottled beer, and then began to bargain as to toll charges.

I omitted to state that about a week before, or just after we struck the river, we overtook another herd owned by a firm named Lee & Bluett from Nebraska. They had about two thousand steers and had started ahead of us a long time, but got scared by the tales of the war and had gone into a fortified camp just west of the Camas Prairie, and had stayed there about a month, which accounted for their not being any farther on their journey.

They were also kicking at the price, which was five cents a head for all loose animals and other things in proportion. We all decided not to cross them, but take our chances of finding a place to swim farther down. One potent argument was that there had been no herds driven down the west bank so far that year, and, therefore, we knew that grass would be plenty.

Fort Hall was thirty-five miles down and that was where the trail left the river to cross the mountains to the east. As we dropped down at the rate of six or eight miles a day, we saw that the stream was becoming wider and less rapid, but the banks were high and steep, and crossing began to look rather doubtful.

One of the men in Bluett's outfit has cause to remember Snake River as long as he lives, and, although his experience was laughable, it was only so to the rest of us. I have forgotten his name, but I remember him well as being a great big, fine looking chap, and as strong as an ox. He came from Bluett's home town of Fremont, Nebraska, and was a typical farmer's lad. At one place, which looked promising, about thirty miles below the bridge, he volunteered to swim across and see how swift the current was, and if the shore on the other side was shelving enough to allow the cattle to land.

His offer was accepted, and he stripped to the buff and struck out like Leander. The distance across was probably three hundred yards, and no one doubted that he could easily do it. When half-way across, to our dismay, we saw he was in trouble, and, in fact, sank entirely from sight for a minute. He came up, however, but it was apparent that he was rapidly getting exhausted. We could do nothing, although one man started to swim to him on a horse, but before he got down to the edge of the water the swimmer had found bottom and waded out.

He lay on his back and did not move for

some minutes, and looked as though he was dead. He got up after a while and then began a conversation which was luxuriant as to expression. He shouted over to us that the suction was so great that he would not dare try to swim back, and the problem was to get to him with food and raiment. Thirty miles up and thirty miles down meant sixty and that meant a day and a night travelling with the horses in the condition ours were. Moreover, the man was as naked as Adam, and there was not a bush or a tree big enough to shelter a dog, and we knew that when night came it would turn bitterly cold. As his supply of matches was decidedly limited we did not envy him his position.

No time was lost, and a man with his horse and clothes was started for the trip with orders to get a relay at Taylor's store at the bridge if his horses gave out. It was about ten or eleven in the morning, and all that day we saw that poor chap standing like a graven image close up under the bank to save himself from the sun's rays.

As night came on we lit a big fire on a knoll about opposite where he was, so as to guide the man who was riding to his relief. We sang to him, and did all we could to keep his

spirits up, but that was a long night for all of us. It is no easy thing to ride across sixty miles of unknown country leading another horse at night and make time, especially if that sixty miles is along the banks of a winding stream and over sagebrush.

About one or two o'clock we heard some one hallooing, and, not long afterwards, we knew that the rescuer had arrived. It was a great relief when we saw the glimmer of a fire on the other bank. Had the man not been as tough as nails, I think he would have succumbed, but as it was, the only ill effects he showed was the blistering of his body. His skin "peeled" from head to foot.

The next day we found a suitable place just opposite to where the town of Blackfoot, Idaho, now stands. A man named Danielson had a little jerk-water ferry consisting of a flat-bottomed boat large enough to hold half a dozen men, and run on the same principle as the larger one at McDowell's. The river here is divided by a low, sandy island so that the actual swimming distance was very short. With the experience we already had had, we knew how to go about it, and held out until late in the afternoon. By five both herds had crossed.

There is another feature about swimming cattle that must be mentioned. It is fatal, if, for any cause, the animals are frightened just before they take the water. If that happens, what is called a "water stampede" results, and drovers who have been unfortunate enough to have this happen, have been delayed a week or ten days trying to get the idea out of the stupid heads of their charges. They will allow themselves to be brought to the very verge of the river, and perhaps drink, but all of a sudden, some steer will bawl and away they go beyond any power to hold them.

Most of us swam the river either on the horses or along side of them. If a horse is a poor swimmer, or timid, he will try to touch bottom with his hind feet and in doing so goes completely under water. The only thing to do then is to drop off on the lower side and hang to the horn of the saddle or else to his tail. By doing this you are out of the way of his hoofs as he beats the water.

The main problem was to get our wagon and bedding across without a wetting. This was finally accomplished by loading the blankets and provisions on the ferry and then taking the wagon to pieces and making a raft, which we pulled across by ropes. It was easy enough,

but took a long time, and our supper that night was not luxurious.

The next day we left the river and struck east to cross a range of hills. Our road led us across the Bannock reservation and by Fort Hall. This was a one-company post and a description of it would be that of many others scattered at that time all through the West. It is hard to realize in these days of railroads and large regimental posts, what forlorn and lonely places these were.

This particular post was not at all bad as far as the situation went. It was in a little valley, and the view of the mountains and plains left nothing to be desired in the way of scenery, but the fact that it was the only spot showing any signs of civilization in a radius of probably from sixty to one hundred miles detracted somewhat from the enjoyment. The nearest railway terminus was at Logan, Utah, about one hundred miles south, the end then of the Utah Northern, and the nearest settlement was Soda Springs, which contained about twenty houses and was sixty miles distant. The command comprised one company of infantry numbering at the outside about thirty men, with possibly two or three officers, including the doctor.

The buildings consisted of barracks, a large barn and two or three officers' quarters, and some other buildings used by the sutler and quartermaster. They were built around the four sides of a square, or parade, with a flag-staff in the centre. I don't remember what regiment was represented, but when we passed, the place was deserted, except by a small guard, as the troops had not returned from the front. There may have been some women there, but we did not see them. The place has since been abandoned by the army and turned into an Indian school.

Civilization was brought disagreeably home to us, however, by the fact that beer and whiskey were sold at the sutler's store. The consequence was that before we got well away from that neighborhood, about all of the boys succeeded in getting more or less filled up, and in two or three cases hopelessly and helplessly drunk. As we travelled very slowly, we remained within reach of that damnable bar for about three days, and finally the only way we stopped the men from sneaking off at night was to ride back ourselves, and if we found their horses tied up outside of the saloon, we would lead them back to camp and thus compel the men to follow on foot

when they got sober. They all managed to get back, although one man came near getting himself into serious trouble by borrowing a horse without permission. We sent it back, however, and with a five dollar bill soothed the angry owner's feelings. A tramp of ten or fifteen miles, to a man unaccustomed to walking, was a very good lesson.

I had a narrow escape here from a very unpleasant experience. One very hot day I came across Lee and a couple of his men bathing in a pool. It looked most tempting and cool, and I was on the point of joining them, but was called away, and as bathing was not a necessary feature of the ordinary work, I forgot all about it. A couple of days afterwards these three men broke out all over with rash, caused by poisoned oak or ivy. I never saw anything like them. At first we thought it was smallpox, as there is always more or less of that disease among the Indians, but Rand, who joined us at Taylor's Bridge, had had experience as a drug clerk and recognized the symptoms in time to save a panic. Luckily, we had plenty of baking powder, so about twice a day we would strip the patients, and all hands would turn to and mop them with water in which the soda had been dissolved.

CHAPTER XVII

A LITTLE FLYER IN LOVE

WE again came to a halt, partly on account of our invalids, but more for the purpose of doctoring our drag of cripples and sore-backed horses. We had left Bluett's herd in the rear and once more had the trail to ourselves. During our stay an amusing thing happened to two of the boys. About a mile from camp, Mellick, our horse wrangler, discovered that a Mormon family, consisting of two men and several women, had taken temporary possession of a deserted ranch. In those days all Mormons seemed to travel with milk cows and chickens, and these were no exception.

If there are any two things a cowboy loves and gets little of, they are milk and butter. So, when the news spread that there were dairy products in sight, a committee of two, a puncher, nicknamed Chub, and Bill Edwards

were detailed to take a couple of camp kettles and bring back anything that looked like milk or butter. There was no trouble in buying what we wanted, but we noticed that these two men, in spite of the difficulty of carrying milk-pails a mile or two on horseback, were always ready to go on the errand. It soon was noised about that one of the younger women was considered very attractive, but in spite of every effort on the part of the cowboys she would not permit them to get farther than a bowing acquaintance, and they never were asked inside the house.

This wounded Chub's pride, and he finally thought out a scheme whereby he might be able to break the ice. The plan was to have Bill Edwards ride a horse in his string named Rattler, who, although naturally docile, could be made to buck by cinching him hard with the flank-cinch and spurring him in the shoulder. Bill was to ride down to the ranch and at the appointed time and place, which was arranged to be just as they reached the front of the house, he was to make Rattler buck and fall off and act as if he was badly injured. It was hoped that this would excite pity in the hearts of the Mormon ladies and cause them to bring him in to minister to his hurts.

The first part of the plan worked like a charm. Rattler bucked, Bill fell off, and Chub started off after Rattler, who lit out at top speed as soon as he felt himself free. Unfortunately, however, Chub's horse stepped into a hole, sent his rider flying, and joined his friend Rattler in a little "pasear" over the prairie. When Bill fell off, he landed harder than he expected and had scraped the whole side of his face, but he picked himself up and limped towards the house, expecting to see the inmates run to his assistance. Chub described what followed.

"When I got on my feet and found my bones all in place," he said, "I loped up to the tabernacle and seen Bill sitting on the stoop with his head tied up like a squaw. I says to him, 'Why in hell don't you go in?' Bill says, '*Go in*, you damn fool, there ain't nobody here, the hull outfit stampeded last night, grub-wagon and all.'"

The first we knew of the failure of the plot was when we saw the two discomfited mashers hoofing it into camp. So much for trying to flirt with Mormon ladies. It proved as Bill said. For some unknown reason, the Mormons, like the Arab, folded their blankets and silently stole away at break of day.

We might have chaffed the pair a good deal if we had not been so anxious about this time on account of the prolonged absence of Mellick who had gone in search of a wild mare that had vamosed one morning after she had been caught up with a view to breaking her to saddle. When she broke away she took a long rope with her, dragging it over the prairie. Had the animal been an ordinary cayuse we would not have bothered much, but she was a full-blooded American filly for which we had traded sometime back. She was a beauty to look at, and everybody predicted she would be a daisy when broken either to saddle or harness and for that reason we were anxious to recover her.

Mellick had started on her trail within an hour after her escape and now, after three days' absence, we began to think something had gone wrong.

I dwell on this incident largely to show what chances we took and how the risks were looked upon as being all in a day's work. A man goes out in a country absolutely unknown to him, practically uninhabited, with a possibility of getting lost or meeting stray bands of unfriendly Indians. He has only enough food to last him a day or two and it is not until the

third day that any one begins to have any anxiety as to his welfare.

Mellick turned up pretty nearly starved but leading his captive nevertheless. With the exception of one meal he had obtained from a friendly prospector whom he found camped in the hills and who had assisted him in trailing the mare, he had had nothing to eat for over thirty-six hours—except chewing tobacco. His pony had given out several times, but he stuck to his job until he found the object of his search nearly forty miles from camp. The rope had become entangled in some sagebrush and this brought her to a standstill. Had he not run her down she would have died from thirst and starvation. It is a pity we ever found her, as she turned out to be an outlaw or spoiled horse. Before we finally shot her she badly injured one man and broke up a hundred dollar spring wagon.

By scouting ahead, we knew we were coming to the big bend of Bear River, and a few days after we had an exciting race to get to the cañon ahead of another herd we saw approaching from the southwest on what is known as the Sublette Cut-off. Not expecting anything from that quarter, we were taken by surprise and at a disadvantage. The country all through this

section is volcanic, with lava formation. In fact there are several mounds which are said by amateurs to be the craters of extinct volcanoes.

We had dropped the cattle off the trail to the south, where we found a patch of good grass and were allowing them to graze, when we noticed the dust-cloud, which always denotes a herd of cattle. A man was sent off to investigate and returned with the report that there was a herd of several thousand big steers, heading for the Bear River Cañon. We did not want them to get ahead for obvious reasons, and immediately we rounded up the herd and started the leaders as rapidly as we could towards the mouth of the cañon in order to hold it until the tail end could be driven up. The men with the other herd had seen us about the same time and were driving for the same purpose.

About a mile from the point we were trying to reach we were brought to a full stop by an abyss in the form of a crevasse in the lava, from six to twenty feet wide, and extending along our front as far as we could see. By this time we were near enough to see the other cattle and the men tearing up and down, doing their utmost to shove them along. I thought the game was up, when one of the boys discov-

ered a narrow causeway not more than twenty to thirty feet wide, which spanned the breach about five hundred yards to the left of where our lead cattle were.

Cows, chickens, and women generally try to go the wrong way in sudden emergencies, and so it was that day. I thought we never would get those fool brutes to see where the crossing was. Finally they started and then we had to wait while they dribbled over. We did not dare crowd them too hard, as it would have been an easy matter to get a hundred of them down the crevasse or start them running in the wrong direction. During the time that it took for about four hundred head to cross, I believe I must have chewed up about five pounds of tobacco in my efforts to keep cool. When at last we began to move, the yells of the men with the other herd could be easily distinguished, and that proved too much for all hands, so we just started the bunch on a dead run for the river and beat the other fellow by about fifteen minutes.

We should surely have lost the race if it had not been for the fact that their cattle had gone many hours without water. When the herd struck the river below the bend they stopped right there to drink, and all the profanity of

which cowboys are capable could not keep them going. This delay gave us time to get well up into the gap ahead of them.

When I found out who was in charge of that herd, I thanked my stars that their leaders stopped of their own volition. Otherwise they would have been driven over or under, or through us, no matter what the consequences. After our drag had come up and we had moved to a safe distance, I started back to find out what sort of an outfit we had behind us. I had noticed that the cattle were Texan and the herd a large one, and asked the first boy I met the usual questions as to number, road brand, destination, and ownership, and where they were from. I found they had started with 4000 head (1500 being big steers) from Cherry Creek, Nevada, sold by Keogh Bros. to a man named Stewart, were going to the Sweetwater River in Wyoming Territory, and were in charge of a man named Blanco. This was the herd we tried to buy in Nevada.

Just then Blanco himself rode up. I had met him a year before at Laramie and knew him at once. When he recognized me his greeting was more than cordial, but couched in the most expressive and vigorous language

of the trail. It ran, as I remember, something like this:

"You —— little son of ——, what in h—— are you doing here?" All of this was accompanied by a smile, almost fatherly in its quality.

Blanco was a simon-pure Texan cowboy and all 'round hard man, without any bluff. I think he had the most cruel face I ever saw on a white man, and yet I know that he had a warm heart and was most appreciative of any kindness.

He was then fifty-three years old, although to look at him you would not have taken him for more than forty. His back was as straight as an arrow and his frame spare and wiry. He was dressed in a suit of confederate gray, with the spring bottom, open sided trousers and short bolero of the Mexican. A big stiff broad brimmed hat and a very dirty ragged crimson sash around his waist, underneath his pistol belt, completed his costume. He wore a mustache that was getting gray and he kept it trimmed straight across his thin-lipped mouth. He had green eyes that glittered like steel, and, as the eyelids were somewhat inflamed from the glare and dust, the expression was anything but attractive.

Blanco's career had been a varied one, and not lacking in incident. As a youngster he had been a rider on the pony mail between Kansas City and San Francisco, his route being somewhere in the neighborhood of Julesburg, Nebraska, a pretty desperate country at the time. During the Civil War he was a Texas Ranger, and across the interim, between 1865 and when I first knew him in 1876, I imagine a veil can be drawn. He served two years and a half in the penitentiary in Wyoming, having been sent up, I think, in '74, for an assault on Judge Orr of Cheyenne, for whom he was working at that time. This little affair illustrates what a really angelic temper the man had.

One day he came to town riding one of Judge Orr's ponies. He dropped into a gambling house for a little diversion and remained there practically for a day. Meantime, some one had reported that his horse was tied outside, and was liable to perish from cold and hunger. Judge Orr, with a mistaken idea of his rights as owner of the horse, had it taken to the stable.

When Blanco finally got through bucking the tiger and, no doubt, feeling a little morose over the manner in which he had been



BLANCO

relieved of his money, came to look for his horse he could not find him. At first he was shocked, and, after taking several drinks he decided he was insulted. Forthwith he proceeded to find out who was guilty of this breach of cowboy etiquette. The idea of a man of his standing among the cow-punchers being put afoot, without his consent, when he had his own saddle on the horse, was a thing not to be tolerated. First thing he knew some one would take him for a sheep-herder, etc.

It was an easy matter for him to learn who had given the obnoxious order. Luckily for all hands he had "soaked" his shooting iron at the gambling house for a stake; otherwise the Wyoming bar would have been shy a member, and I never would have had the pleasure of meeting Blanco. He had, therefore to make the best of a bad job with a knife. After carving his employer and a clerk into insensibility, he calmly proceeded to the stable, removed his saddle, and informed the proprietor of the barn that the outfit did not need his services any longer.

Orr did not die, nor did the clerk, but Blanco was tried and sentenced to five years at hard labor in the Wyoming Penitentiary. He told

me that Orr got his time reduced, because he knew that if Blanco served the full term he would cut Orr's head off as the first piece of hard work after his release. Blanco would have done it, too.

I first met Blanco in Laramie City, when he came out of prison, and gave him a job at the request of the warden. We were haying at the time, and I put him on a mowing-machine, as I thought it was the nearest thing to a bucking bronco that I knew of. He stuck to his job until the time came for the fall round up, but I believe he broke up more sickles and castings on that machine than any man ever did before or since. The rougher the ground the more he seemed to enjoy it, and you could hear him yelling a mile off.

By way of relaxation he busted four broncos for us, and on a bet of two dollars tackled one of the worst outlaws in that section. How a man of his age could stand the jarring he got has always been a puzzle to me. The name of the horse was Muldoon, bestowed on him, I suppose, from his knack of falling on people and crushing the life out of them. But he met something as tough as he was when Blanco stepped into the ring. Muldoon's method was to stand perfectly still while being saddled and



"STA-Y WITH HIM, BLANCO"

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bridled, but the second a man got seated he would rear straight in the air and throw himself backward, or he would buck up to the side of a corral and then hurl himself against it.

He tried all these tricks, but in vain. Blanco, for a wonder, was absolutely silent, but I knew he was boiling within. This could be seen by the way he dug his spurs into the brute to make him get up after he had thrown himself. The end was tragic and looked like suicide. The horse after a few rounds of furious bucking got fairly exhausted, and was covered with dust, sweat, and blood. He had just made one of his backward lunges, and Blanco was on the ground. With a squeal of rage Muldoon stood up on his hind legs, made a couple of vicious drives with his fore feet at his tormentor, who had not had time to mount him, and fell back. He never moved again. His neck had been broken.

These few delicate touches, I hope, will show you what kind of a hairpin my friend was. Poor old chap, the last I heard of him was that he had gone crazy and was confined in an asylum. But prior to that I had several letters from him, written in jail at Reno, Nevada, where another shooting scrape had

landed him. I sold a horse that he had left in my care and sent him the money. I have always regretted that I did not keep his letters. They certainly were in a class by themselves.



CHAPTER XVIII

COWBOY FUN AND ITS USUAL SEQUEL

ABOUT five miles from the mouth of the cañon where we met Blanco, we came to the settlement known as Soda Springs. We were much surprised to find that the buildings were much more pretentious than the size of the place seemed to warrant. There were quite a number of comfortable-looking cottages, and the place even boasted of a public common and a hotel. There was the "co-op" store, which showed the presence of the Mormon, and altogether, it seemed quite metropolitan. The reason for all this was, that Brigham Young liked the place and had tried to make it a sort of Saratoga for the Saints. Had he lived no doubt he would have succeeded.

The springs in the neighborhood are certainly remarkable, and no doubt have as much virtue—medicinally—as any other health resort waters. As curiosities, they rank with some of

the wonders of the Yellowstone. In the centre of the town there stood a perfect dome-shaped mound about twenty feet high, yellowish-white in color. On climbing to the top, which was somewhat difficult, owing to the smoothness, one discovered a small jet of water about five inches in diameter spouting up for as many inches into the air. The water was lukewarm and had a slightly salt taste. The mound had been made by the gradual encrustation or formation of the lime in the water.

Another spring, known as "ninety per cent." because it contained that amount of soda, bubbled from the side of a hill. All the springs were effervescent, so much so that small birds were frequently asphyxiated while trying to drink at them. A mile or two from town on the open prairie were several springs, probably thirty feet in diameter, of perfectly clear water bubbling like a glass of champagne, from what seemed a fathomless depth, for no bottom was visible. Within ten feet of one of these clear springs would be another of boiling mud, and, a little farther on, one of sulphur.

I believe that some large brewing firm of Milwaukee has put up bottling works and now ships this natural "fizz" water all over the world.

I afterwards came back to this place and made of it summer headquarters while ranging our cattle on the Blackfoot bottoms, and found that the waters of these springs acted as a first-class antidote to the red-eye whiskey which was sold over the bar at the saloon in the village. In fact, I think, had it not been for the antidote we all should have been permanently "locoed" from the whiskey.

Another tragedy happened here, due to whiskey, which lost us a good man and cost him a year in the penitentiary at Boisé City. His name was Howard; he was one of the men we hired at Boisé and claimed to come from California. He proved to be a first-class cowboy, an expert with a six-shooter, but, withal, a very quiet mannered chap. One leg was shorter than the other, which I attributed to hip trouble, but I found out afterward that he had been shot.

Naturally, the saloon at Soda Springs was the magnet that drew every man from all three of the herds, Bluett's, Blanco's, and ours, who could get away and had a dollar to spend. When about twenty cowboys, most of whom are armed, "wild and woolly and hard to curry," get together in a saloon for the first time in several months, and all have something coming

in the way of wages, you can usually bet your saddle that trouble will be brewing.

I may particularly add that at this meeting the delegation from Blanco's outfit was all that could be desired in the way of bibulous conviviality. They were Nevada *buckeroos*, and that thickly populated State could turn out a finished article in the way of hard-riding, gun-playing, noise-producing yaps. Every few minutes, the leader—evidently anxious that no mistakes be made as to their identification or occupation—would yell :

“ I'm a bold, bad man and a desperader,
Came to town on a green tornader ;
I vamped around like a wild gezaber,
And every time I took a drink,
Whoop—Nevader.”

No further intimation was necessary. Quick action was immediately forthcoming from the bartender. Slowness of comprehension in like cases has been followed by fatal results. To add to the sociability of the occasion, there were also present a few of the Mormon punchers and some nondescripts or transients, who may have been there for their health.

To attempt in anyway to curb the revelry and exhilaration of the men would have been fool-

hardy in the extreme. Arguments are lost on cowboys full of whiskey and with more in sight, and the owners kept out of the way as much as possible and relied on the lack of money or credit, and inflammation of the lining of the stomach to bring the men to a realizing sense of their duty. We brought the herd safely through the town, camped on an open prairie about five miles beyond, and waited to give the boys a chance to finish their spree.

Early one morning, Howard rode in, woke Rand, and told him he had shot a man in town, but had not stopped to find out if he had killed him. He had no idea who his victim was, but he knew he did not belong to any of the cow outfits. Knowing that sometimes people got hasty with a rope in those days, we told him to take his blankets and some grub and run for the hills until we could find out what had happened.

As soon as daylight was strong and we had breakfasted, we rode in to investigate. The man was dead sure enough, and his body was lying in the corner of the saloon with a towel thrown over his face. A good many of the Mormon natives had collected and were doing a lot of talking about what they were going to do. We found that the man was a stranger

that had drifted in, no one knew where from, and that his death, really, had been accidental.

There is a very annoying habit that is acquired by some cowboys of making a man dance while shooting at his heels. The habit generally manifests itself when said cowboy is loaded as well as his gun. There need not necessarily be any ill feeling or a wish to humiliate the dancer. In fact, if talent is displayed by him, it may be taken as a sign of approval on the part of the shooter—applause, in fact. In this case, I think the latter assumption held. All accounts agreed that the stranger was an artist and had endeared himself during the evening to his audience, so much so that his drinks came often.

Howard, poor fellow, being a cripple himself, naturally admired him more than the others, and for that reason began to keep time for him. Somehow, in swinging his pistol, the middle finger through the trigger-guard acting as a pivot, he had discharged it too soon and the bullet went through the dancer's stomach. It must have hit his spine, as they say he only lived a few minutes.

We all contributed toward his funeral expenses and hoped that would be the end of it,

but somebody got busy and about a week afterwards the sheriff overtook us. Howard could have escaped, and, I think, had he killed the man in a fight, he would have attempted to do so. But he felt very remorseful, and as we all were very sure that any jury would acquit him, he surrendered himself. He turned up at Laramie the next year and told us they had sent him to prison for a year, one of the vagaries of a Western jury.

"Ill blows the wind that profits nobody," and this accident rather cooled things off, and for a while everything was very gentle. I went back as far as Soda Springs with Howard and the sheriff, and happening to meet Bluett, we decided to take a rest. Owing to the attraction of the saloon, we had been short-handed. It had fallen on the bosses to do extra night work, and I was pretty well worn out. A Mrs. Williams, bless her! kept the hotel. It had but three rooms, but she was a good cook and there was any amount of milk and eggs, and for three blissful days Bluett and I camped. We slept in sheets all night and on a lounge and in a big armchair all day, except when we were eating. We had fried chicken and fresh vegetables and all the eggs and milk we wanted, and Mrs. Williams to soothe us. She was

rather a good-looking woman, about thirty years of age and most sympathetic.

A remark of Bluett's at the time shows the state of mind a man gets into after three or four consecutive months on the trail. During a lucid moment just after dinner one day, he mumbled to himself :

"If I live to get through this trip, I hope I never will hear a cow bawl again as long as I live."

To any one accustomed to the luxuries of civilization, the fact of sleeping in a bed between sheets and sitting down to a meal served on a table with "fixin's" and a cloth does not, perhaps, seem an event to be noted. But let that same person go for three or four months without taking all his clothes off at the same time, squat on his heels while eating; let his diet be meat, bread, and coffee straight; and let him lie down to sleep always with a dread of being waked in the night by an alarm followed by the hubbub of a stampede, and he will know what these three days of rest and perfect calm meant to us.

All things good and bad come to an end, so, after dinner on the third day, we set out to overtake our respective outfits. The next two days we spent in Blanco's camp. It was

a hard game and no mistake. They seemed to be short of everything, and their horses were in a terrible condition. I volunteered a little sympathy in the matter and was told that they had no *horses*; everybody was afoot, etc. It was a fact that the men on the drag were mostly walking and leading their horses. The only thing they had to eat that was decent was some jerky or dried beef. It was the best I ever tasted, and I had a chance during the next day or so to see how it was prepared.

The two Mexican horse herders had charge of its manufacture, and as they were about to start on a new batch, I saw the whole process. A fat heifer about two years old, which had been bought or stolen from some Mormon ranch, was killed and skinned. The meat, except what was used immediately for the wants of the mess, was cut from the carcass in long, thin strips. The whole mass was then liberally sprinkled with salt, wrapped up in the green or damp hide of the animal, and put away overnight to allow it to sweat. By this process the animal heat is drawn from the meat.

The next day the hide is opened and the contents thoroughly mixed up, salted some more, and returned for another baking. After

about forty-eight hours of this the meat has become well saturated with the salt and has a bluish hue. It is then spread out on a wagon sheet in the sun whenever a halt is made, and in a day or so it hardens into something that looks like sole leather. The difference, however, is that when you take a piece and hold it to the fire on the end of a pointed stick you will soon have a tender, juicy morsel all seasoned to taste.

Like all recipes, a great deal depends on the skill of the person preparing it. The Mexicans "savey" just the length of time to keep it baking to insure its being tender without allowing it to spoil, and I also think they put chili peppers in it to give it a flavor. I traded some flour and sugar for a couple of gunny sacks full of the "jerky," and it was a great treat. When the boys came in from herd at night they would go straight for the bag and cook a supper for themselves before turning in.



CHAPTER XIX

A WILD NIGHT

A DAY or two after I joined the herd we had about as wild a night as I ever saw or want to see. Owing to some obstacles, such as Mormon ranches, which were scattered about, and our approach to a settlement called Montpelier, the three herds, Bluett's, our own, and Blanco's, had got rather too close together for comfort, although I think we should have gradually pulled out to safe distances had not the elements conspired to make a mess of it all. Thunder-storms, although not as frequent as in the East, are about as violent as an ordinary man cares to see when they are of normal proportions.

We had several days of very hot weather, and at sundown things looked rather squally. We had no tents to blow down, in fact nothing on that would hurt, and for this reason paid little attention, except to notice that the light-

ning seemed rather sharp. I think we sent an extra man on herd, and I told Mellick not to get too far from camp, and if the storm became worse and he thought there would be trouble, to bring the horses in.

Bluett was to leeward and Blanco to windward, and at times we could plainly hear Blanco's men howling like coyotes, but as that seemed to be their favorite amusement, it did not worry us. We were on a high plateau, between two ranges of hills which sloped gradually to the shores of Bear Lake to the south. The surface of the ground was rolling, with now and then a steep bluff, and was scored in all directions by coulées, or deep ditches made by the water running down from the high land in the spring, all of which were dry at this season of the year. These coulées were from three feet to twenty broad and about the same in depth. The soil was a sort of yellow alkali, all right when dry, but worse than clay when wet.

Our camp was on the edge of a small stream running into Bear River. There were a few shrubs on the banks, but as the creek descended the brush increased in height and thickness. We could see at some distance from us what looked like quite a patch of

timber and which proved to be Bear Lake marshes.

When I turned in I felt rather doubtful, but hoped the storm would switch off into the mountains, and with that consoling thought in my mind was soon sleeping the sleep, etc. It did not seem more than a minute, however, before I felt a kick and woke up to hear Flatteau telling me to jump up lively, as the whole of Blanco's herd was on top of us. I think I have mentioned before that in a cow camp, when a man gets up, he is up, barring his shoes and hat, and that was my case. It was as dark as pitch, but the flashes of lightning were frequent enough to enable us to see something of our surroundings.

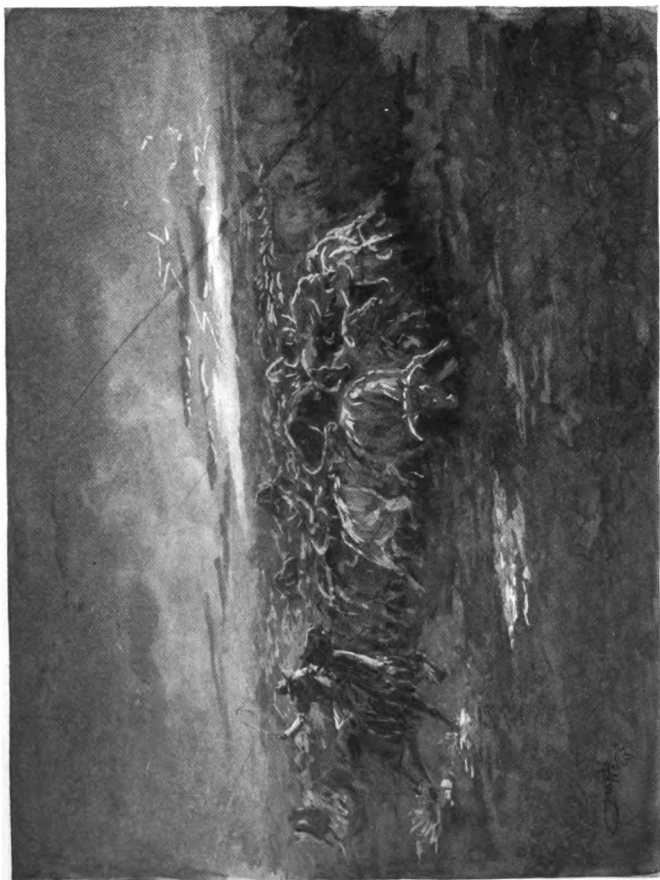
The rain had not yet begun, and there was that lull with the feeling of dampness on the air, which comes just before the jig begins. However, things were moving, and when I got fairly awake I felt, with Flatteau, that Blanco's Texans were loose and coming our way, and from the noise I judged they were coming head down.

Mellick, as usual, was Johnny on the Spot, and before any one had a chance to swear, he had his horses in camp. The crash of the elements and the tramping of the horses,

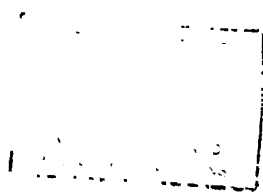
added to the bawling of the rapidly approaching cattle, the yells and oaths of the men, created a symphony that was calculated to raise hair on anything that lived in that particular neighborhood. But we had to omit the applause and go to catching horses.

The main thought was to get on to something with four legs, and either head off those bellowing brutes that were coming through the black night on a dead run, with forked lightning prodding them in the rump at every jump, or else get into a hole and pull it in after us. Just then the rain came. No attempt was made to pick a horse—it was grab anything that was nearest.

The horses were either overawed by the storm, or else appreciated the fact that their services were in demand. Horses always stand still in a storm. At all events, they stood to be caught, and it is here that I wish to again call your attention to the non-kicking trait in the cayuse or bronco. No one was kicked, although the loose ends of the ropes were being dragged about under their heels, and there were some unbroken colts in the band. Men were pushing and hitting them to get through or to reach another animal, but all they did was to try to avoid trouble.



BROKE LOOSE AND COMING YOUR WAY



By some good chance, or else because he arranged it, I found my faithful Coalie at my elbow, and was hurrying him to where my saddle was, when Flatteau, clad in the long linen duster which he always wore, rushed up and asked what horse he should take. We had a buckskin named One-eyed Riley, which happened to be at hand, so I caught him up. One-eyed Riley had lost an eye in some encounter with an enraged Indian. The loss of that eye seemed to have dampened his ambition, and he never wished to move faster than a walk. So far, I had never seen any argument strong enough to make him change his mind, but I was to get a surprise that night.

Men work pretty fast under pressure, and it was not long before we were in the saddle and striking out in the direction in which we thought our herd was. A flash, or, rather, a series of flashes, of lightning showed me a bunch of steers stampeding and running east about two hundred yards off. The next flash revealed old Flatteau and Riley going like the wind in an opposite direction. Flatteau's linen duster was about the same color as Riley, and the lightning made them look like a phantom as they disappeared.

Of all the mixed-up messes one can imagine,

this was the worst. The expected had happened, and, evidently, the whole three herds had come together, making a bunch of between eight and nine thousand head. Coalie showed his intelligence. When the ground was right he would run his best, but when we came to pitfalls he knew it and was cautious. We slid down bluffs and jumped into gullies and out, but never a misstep or stumble. I lost all track of direction or distance, but soon found myself or, rather, felt myself in the immediate vicinity of quite a bunch of animals that had come to a halt and evidently were telling one another how foolish it was for the others to be frightened about nothing. I knew their terror was over, for they were mooing, not bawling. By this time the worst of the storm had passed, and before long the stars began to show in places, although the thunder and lightning continued.

There must have been mineral, probably iron, in the rocks about, for it seemed to me that the lightning struck the ground all about us. I found I was alone, but whom the cattle belonged to was a question. Soaked to the skin, I was not in a cheerful mind. I had not the faintest idea where my downy couch was, or, in fact, whether I had any left or not, as I

felt morally sure that the pick of Blanco's rabble had galloped directly across where our blankets were lying. Soon the cattle began to lie down, and then I dismounted. The next thing it was daylight. I had gone sound asleep stretched on the prairie.

Stiff, cold, and hungry, I looked about and found I was in a bowl-shaped depression and had about four or five hundred head of Bluett's steers and our own. Thank goodness, I had missed the Texan terrors. Immediately I rode to the highest point I could see in order to get a survey of the country and find my landmarks in the range of hills to the north. The cattle had run about seven miles. I worked the bunch back, and soon saw other men and stray bunches. By noon of that day we had gathered the main portion of the three herds into three separate bands, containing some from each herd. We went to work sorting or cutting out, and by supper-time we were pretty well cleaned up, although no one had counted them, and we therefore did not know what number we were out.

Suddenly it flashed on me that I had not seen Flatteau, and, on inquiry, found that no one else had. I knew that he was a fairly good horseman, although not a cowboy. But

Riley was handicapped by being blind on one side, and I feared his rider had met with some mishap. It was too late to do much hunting that night, but I determined to start some one out in the morning. We were spared that trouble, however, as Flatteau and Riley turned up just before dark.

Riley looked like the devil, but Flatteau was in a more than cheerful frame of mind. He was singing the *Switzer's Farewell*, a song of which he was very fond. He had in his hand a bottle of whiskey and I think he had about a bottle inside. The world was rosy and his cares were few. I noticed that both he and Riley had a coating of mud about an inch thick all over, and that poor Riley's flanks were all cut up and bleeding. I saw then for the first time that Flatteau had on a pair of English spurs. That explained Riley's speed; he had heretofore been accustomed to the punching of the blunt Mexican spur, but the sting of the sharp pointed rowel had taken him off his guard. Later on, Flatteau, under the influence of the Mormon whiskey, gave us a modest outline of his adventures. In the first place, he insisted that at the drop of the flag Riley had started and run without a stop for about fifty miles. He swore he ran out of the thunder-

storm, and if it had not been for Bear Lake, he would have been going still. He also informed us that they had fallen off of several high mountains and had floated a mile or so down a torrent, besides rolling into several coulées. The veneer of clay which stuck to both horse and rider seemed to confirm the last statement. At about sun-up he found himself close to a Mormon ranch on the shore of Bear Lake, and as both he and Riley seemed to have done a fairly good night's work, he decided to rest. Accordingly he had turned in on a haymow, and later, after having had something to eat, had taken the back trail. He did not leave, however, before he had hobnobbed sufficiently with the ranchman to learn that he had just returned from a trip to the town of Logan and had a demijohn of the native jig-water. Hence old Flatteau's elongated story and his rosy view of life. Next day it was different. Logan whiskey is made in Logan and that explains much.

The ultimate results of the stampede were not as disastrous as might have been expected from a mix-up of this character; no one was seriously hurt as far as I remember, although there were several nasty falls. We got our respective brands finally cut out, and once

more set out on the road. The trail for a hundred miles, or until Green River is reached, is very hilly. It is nothing but a succession of divides between which the streams run almost all in a southerly direction, and we were crossing them at right angles.

Every day brought its troubles of balky cattle or stalled wagon. The long journey was beginning to tell on the whole lot, cattle and horses, and, therefore, the hills seemed steeper and longer. One day I noticed a thing which convinced me that dumb brutes have some silent way of communicating with each other at a distance. Our leaders, about a hundred in number, had just passed over the top of a high ridge. When totally out of sight of the rest of the herd, which was lazily climbing the hill on the other side, the lead cattle were startled by coming suddenly on a bear that was in a clump of brush near a spring about four hundred yards from the summit. They lit out for all they were worth, but were rounded up at the foot of the hill, probably two miles from where they started.

This whole thing happened out of sight of everybody except the two men who were riding on the point, but, nevertheless, every bunch that passed that spot did the same thing. The

bear had vanished and the clump of brush was no different from hundreds they had passed, but something had warned them of danger, and they acted accordingly. How is it explained?

For some weeks we had been meeting, at intervals, wagon trains of immigrants. Sometimes they would number as many as ten or twelve families. Most of them seemed to come from the States of Missouri and Arkansas. There were children of all sizes and both sexes, even babies in arms. Some of the families had a few head of horned stock, and I noticed chickens and ducks in one wagon. The children were like so many little Indians, and had about as much clothing, but all seemed healthy and happy. I had talks with some of the men and found that their intention was to keep going until cold weather came on and then they would halt. Although Oregon and Washington Territory seemed to be their destination in a vague way, they seemed rather indifferent as to where they eventually wound up.

I here stumbled over an infant industry which was nothing more or less than a factory for the making of genuine Swiss cheese. The proprietor was a Swiss, and had with him a small colony of his countrymen. They had

settled in a little secluded valley well off the travelled road, and had built houses and barns modelled after those of the mother country. The head of the colony owned a herd of a hundred and fifty milk cows or more, and was a little king. Flatteau made a mash on him, so we were shown all there was to be seen. There was a cellar dug in the side of a hill which was large enough to hold twenty or thirty tons of cheese, and we were told that between ten and twelve tons were then stowed away. During the summer, when the cows were giving the most milk, all hands turned in and made cheese, but along in October they would load up their wagons, of which there seemed to be quite a number, and haul the stuff down to Evanston, on the Union Pacific Railroad, south, about 100 miles distant by the road down Bear River.

The proprietor told us that one firm in Chicago took all he made. His wagons brought back the supplies for the winter, with, I suppose, dress goods and trinkets for the women, and then, like the bears, nothing would be heard of them until spring opened. The settlement was evidently most prosperous, and I suppose the Chicago people were not losing money. They were all Mormons,

by the by, although we were told there were no "polygs" among them.

At last we came to the headwaters of Smith's Fork of Green River, and as we had to follow it down some distance, we were spared for awhile the everlasting loading and unloading of our wagon in order to get it over the high places.

Rand took occasion here to make a nuisance of himself by accidentally blowing a hole in his anatomy and coming within an ace of putting me out of business at the same time. Some one had begun to take a Winchester carbine to pieces to clean it, but had omitted to empty the magazine. Rand tried to finish the job, but somehow the gun went off, and as the cartridge blew out it took off a part of his chest on the right side, and the bullet struck the ground about six inches from where I was kneeling in the very laudable occupation of washing my only undershirt.

When I heard the report of the explosion I looked around and saw Rand stretched on the ground, dead, as I supposed, with a gaping wound in his chest. I ran to him and found he could swear, which he proceeded to do after he had recovered his breath, which had been knocked out of him. The skin was very

much powder burned and blackened, but after I had washed it I could not find any holes, although my impression was that the bullet had gone through him. Rand said he did not feel anything queer about his insides, and, as we could find no place in his back where anything came out, we diagnosed it as a superficial wound.

Some one said that hops made a fine poultice, so we greased the place with lard from salt bacon and applied the poultice, but the tail of Flatteau's linen duster had to go to make the bag for the hops. After the excitement had subsided we investigated and found that the wound had been caused by the brass shell of the cartridge, which had been blown out of the magazine, and had scooped a furrow about two inches long out of his side, the force of the explosion doing the rest. Our surgical treatment was heroic but effective, and within a week he was practically well enough to work. The hop poultice drew out all the powder, and, no doubt, the poisonous effects of the brass in the wound.

We found the bullet flattened against a rock just at my elbow as I knelt while washing. I remembered afterward hearing the thud, but at the time it passed unnoticed.

This goes to prove that Napoleon was right when he said it was a bad plan to wash soiled linen in public.

For a week or so we had been annoyed considerably by Blanco's big leaders getting too close to our herd, and a narrow escape from another mix-up determined us to pull to one side at the first good opportunity and let him go ahead. This we did, and it was a great relief.

The last trouble we had with his herd happened on Fontenelle Creek. The trail led down from the high plateau to the creek bottom, along the ledge of a "hog back." A "hog back" is a narrow ridge with steep sides leading from a high to a lower level. The bottom or meadow through which the stream ran was thickly covered with scrub willows and brush, and in places was very soft and miry. We had come safely through and had our herd pushed well away on the high bench beyond, for we by this time were on to the eccentricities of the longhorns and knew they were not to be depended upon.

With two or three of the men I went back to help Blanco, as I felt sure he was going to have trouble getting down that ridge. When I first saw his leaders they were half-way down

the declivity and seemed to be doing all right. Suddenly, as is always the case with cattle, they decided to take a short cut for the green grass and trees they saw below. I shall have to quote Mark Twain to describe what they looked like as they coasted down that boulder-strewn side of the hill at an angle of 45°. He describes the evolution by saying that the cattle came down with their tails hanging out between their teeth. If I wrote a chapter on the subject I could not give an idea of the effect as realistically. The minute they struck the brush, they scattered in all directions.

We held them up, however, and everything seemed to be straightening out when I came on Blanco trying to pull a cow out of a mud hole. He had roped her about the horns and somehow had yanked her head so that he broke her neck. This seemed to drive him crazy. He sprang from his horse, threw his hat on the ground and began to jump on it, accompanying his actions with a line of oaths that I think he must have invented. When he looked up at me, the fire was jumping out of his eyes, and I expected any minute he would turn on me. He shook his fist at me and said that if the brush had grown on that creek for any good reason, he would have

accepted the fact with Christian resignation, but he knew that God Almighty had put it there for no other purpose than to worry him, etc. I vanished as soon as I could without wounding his feelings, as I felt that in his present mood he should be treated with the utmost consideration. I only saw him once or twice after that. His herd went on to the Sweetwater, where it was sold.



CHAPTER XX

SOME JOYS OF THE TRAIL

THE next river of any size to cross was Green River, but by this time the water was getting low, and it was only a question of wading. We followed up the river on the east bank for about forty miles, until we came to what is known as the New Fork. We then turned to the eastward again. It was now well along in September and the weather was getting quite cool, in fact, cold at night. We found the change much to our liking, but about this time we put in a week of extreme discomfort.

This is essentially an alkali country. Any one who crosses the continent on the Union Pacific Railroad can satisfy himself as to this fact by looking out of the car window anywhere between Rock Springs and Evanston in Wyoming, but it is necessary to get off and travel on horseback to get the full benefit of its health-producing qualities.

Rain-storms in the region are rare, but quite frequently, along about equinoctial time, there comes a snow-storm which ends in sleet, and we were just lucky enough to encounter one of these. The snow began to fall during the day, and in less time than it takes to write it, the whole country had become a mass of sticky gumbo. They tell me Virginia clay is binding, but I'll back Wyoming gumbo against glue. The travel grew worse and worse; the wheels of the wagon becoming solid masses of mud. When the cook happened on the trunk of a big cottonwood tree lying near the bank of the river, he swung off and went into camp, sending the horse herder to tell us he could go no farther as the horses could not haul the wagon.

The storm lasted three days and nights, but it was a week before we could move, and meantime all we could do was shiver and swear. Everything became soaked after the first twenty-four hours, and we had no shelter for our blankets except the wagon sheet, and that was torn and burnt in so many places that it gave little protection. At times the snow and sleet came down so hard that unless you held something over your plate while eating, everything would be swimming in water.

To add to the suffering, we had not an extra set of underclothes in the outfit. There were no gloves, practically no stockings, and the toes of our boots gaped open where we had burned them at the camp-fire. There were two or three canvas overcoats, but they were passed from one to another as the men went on herd. All the comfort we had was from a rousing fire, which we kept going night and day.

I was in a bad way, as the trouble with my "insides" had come back, and I also had a crop of Job's comforters, which prevented me from sitting down with any degree of comfort. This made it very awkward to ride. Altogether, I must have been in rather a desperate condition, but did not know it, and had it not been for the pain I should not have paid much attention to it. Luckily, the cattle showed very little disposition to wander far, as there was quite a lot of brush along the banks, which made a wind-break; besides that, they also found difficulty in travelling in the mud.

On New Fork we came to a camp which had only lately been abandoned, but which we saw was not made by a cow outfit nor an emigrant or Indian. In fact, it had a suspicious look, especially as we knew this was a favorite retreat for horse thieves, road agents, and

other gentry that wished to avoid the sheriff. Evidently, there were but four or five in the party, and they had no spare horses. Another thing also that went to prove that something was wrong was a piece of black cloth we found with places cut in for the eyes—in other words, a rough mask.

From New Fork we crossed on to Big Sandy and had another set-to with a snow-storm, although not as bad as the first. It stopped us, and we put in our time killing a beef. We had cause to congratulate ourselves on this delay. Upon reaching the Big Sandy, Balch and myself were riding ahead to look up the trail. When we had gone four or five miles we came to a tent and corral standing some distance back from the road. With a view to inquiring the way, we rode up. The appearance on the outside was suggestive of something wrong and everything was deathly quiet. We dismounted and drew aside the flap of the tent. Upon looking inside we found three men and a boy, bound and gagged, lying outstretched. We released them, and they told us they had been there in that condition for two days and a half without food or water and were in bad shape. They probably would have been in a worse one had they not been sure

of the coming of another man within a day or two.

They told us they had been waked up at dawn three days before by five men pointing guns at them and inviting them to hold up their hands. The intruders then bound them and carried them into the brush, where they kept them all day. Just at nightfall they brought the captives back to the tent, gagged them, took all their blankets, saddles, and thirteen head of horses. As the robbers explained it to the men in the tent, they had waited that day for the purpose of waylaying us. They had evidently mistaken our outfit for Bluett's, as they said they were expecting a herd from Oregon that had a fine bunch of horses which they intended to appropriate. Bluett did have some blooded mares, I believe, but I think they would have dropped our poor ponies in very short order.

The hardship of cold nights now began to be felt in earnest, and we were driven to all sorts of expedients to make up for a lack of clothes. A flour sack got to be such a cause of trouble that we had to draw lots for our turn to get one when empty. These were made into bandages for the feet in default of stockings, also for ear-muffs and

gloves, or rather mittens, and for piecing our under-garments. There was not much sewing done, as we had but two or three needles, and very little thread.

We were getting into pretty high altitudes without reckoning the season of the year. I think South Pass City is about six thousand feet, possibly more, therefore the temperature went below the freezing point every night. The question of fires was also one that figured quite prominently. To the Eastern mind a camp always means a snug spot in the woods with plenty of shelter and underbrush handy to make a rousing fire. I have often listened to stories of roughing it in the Maine woods, where, as far as I could see, the "roughing" meant wearing a flannel shirt and old clothes. On the trail it is different.

In selecting a camp, water is the determining factor. The question of comfort is not considered. The fuel is composed of buffalo chips or dead twigs from sagebrush, which, although making the best kind of fire for cooking purposes, has not that cheerful warming quality supplied by pine boughs. Once in awhile, as on Green River, we found all the fire-wood we wanted, but nine out of ten camps found everybody hustling for fuel.

Nothing can exceed the bleakness of a real cow camp if the weather is boisterous and cold. The only place to get warm is in the blankets, and then a bunkie is necessary, in order to get thoroughly thawed out. Before we reached South Pass City, where clothes could be obtained, we were like shipwrecked sailors, but, like them, we were tough and could stand the strain.

South Pass City was unique in its way. Although it boasted of several hundred houses and shanties, the population numbered I think seven souls in all. A man named Smith, his wife, two children, two clerks, and the hired girl—a half-breed Arapahoe squaw—made up the number. Smith kept a general store and did a business that would have made Wana-maker tremble. South Pass City was born, grew up and died in about a year's time. Gold was the father and a fool-crowd the mother. I believe that this matrimonial alliance has been responsible for a large family of just such offspring. They outgrew their strength and died young.

This particular corpse had turned up its toes four or five years previously after having (so said Smith) reached a stature of somewhere between three and ten thousand inhab-

itants. The only reliable way to get at the population of a mining camp is to count the saloons and multiply that by the number of patrons of any one you may select, and divide that by ten in order to allow for repeating. It is a dead sure proposition that every man and woman in that town goes into a bar once a day at least, and ten drinks per capita I should call very conservative.

It gave rather a creepy sensation to walk about in the deserted streets and not hear a sound. The buildings remained, signs and all, just as they had been abandoned, and although I don't remember just how many rum shops we counted, I know that there were sufficient to back Smith's statement as to population. We had no difficulty about fire wood here. Whenever the pile got low we would go out and tear down a hotel or any other house that was handy.

Our first care was to get some clothing, but as our funds were getting low, we felt a little diffidence about the size of our purchases, until we had explained the situation and were told by Mr. Smith to take anything we wanted in the store and send the pay for it when we got ready. We traded with him for several years after that and found it was not at all an un-

common thing for him to carry his credits for customers for a year, or until they had marketed their cattle. Of course, his price savored somewhat of Fifth Avenue and he therefore could give time. He told me he had never so far contracted a bad debt from a cow outfit, which speaks pretty well for their honesty—as far as storekeepers go; when it comes to other matters we will not say so much.

Although this is called a Pass, it would not be regarded as such by any one not accustomed to the size of the country. It is about seventy or eighty miles wide from north to south, lying between the Wind River Mountains on the north and the Wasatch range on the south. Here you find the dividing of the waters on the continent. At Pacific Springs, near this place, heads a stream that flows into the Pacific Ocean by way of Green River and the Rio Grande, and a mile to the east another stream starts that empties into the Gulf of Mexico by way of the Sweetwater, Platte, Missouri and Mississippi. I have taken a drink from both springs within a few minutes, just for the sake of saying I had done so.

After crossing the divide, we came to the head of the Sweetwater River and followed it. The Sweetwater runs almost east and empties

into the North Fork of the Platte River, near Independence Rock. This was the old trail used by the immigrants back in the forties on their way to Oregon.

That reminds me that for nearly four months we had had the company of an old fellow, (he was sixty-five years old, I should say,) who had asked leave to join us on the trip across for the sake of the protection afforded by numbers. He had an old tumble-down wagon and a pair of fairly good horses, and although always camping by himself and some little distance from us, he always fell into line when we moved. I often watched him cooking and I know that except when we would give him some fresh meat, his sole diet was coffee, bacon and flapjacks, made in a frying-pan. We would have been very glad to give him anything he wanted, but he was as independent as a Sioux chief and would accept nothing unless he paid for it.

We found he had made several journeys across this same trail from his original home in Missouri and was now going back for good. He had evidently survived all the members of his family. He told us that he had raised two families but that they had all gone.

Near the three crossings of Sweetwater,

in a secluded spot among some high rocky buttes, he showed me a graveyard that had been started in the year '58 or '59 when cholera broke out among the immigrants on the trail, and he also pointed out the spot where he had buried his first wife and a daughter. They were travelling with a big wagon train when the scourge attacked them, and a large number died. The piles of stones remained almost as they were originally thrown together. I counted over a dozen mounds and the old man said that during that year the road could be traced by the new-made graves. He had married again and some children were born, but all died, I suppose from hardship and lack of medical attendance.

When I was there it was a question of the survival of the fittest as far as children were concerned, and the condition twenty years prior to that time was even worse. I do not doubt that the story of this man's life was that of thousands of the pioneers of early days—one long fight against hardship and disease, the strongest and luckiest getting a foothold and accumulating some property, and the weaker either succumbing or drifting back to die in their old homes. But all, whether

weak or strong, did something toward opening the way for the less venturesome, and finally for the sewing machine agent, the lightning rod man, and the railroads.



CHAPTER XXI

COUNTING THE COST

ONE morning from the top of a hill I caught sight of Laramie Peak, and then I began to feel that we were getting somewhere. Although the mountain was eighty miles north of our ranch, and probably as far, if not further, from where I stood, it seemed like home, because from our ranch the mountain could plainly be seen on any clear day. Like school boys at the end of a term, we now began to cross off days instead of weeks, although Laramie Peak at this end, just as Mount Hood at the other, seemed to stand still in spite of the fact that we were travelling toward it all the time.

My luck as far as sickness went had been of the worst, and at this point I had what I supposed a quinsy sore throat. At all events, for seven or eight days I could hardly swallow, and my throat swelled up as though I had the

mumps. One of the boys cauterized it on the inside by dipping an eagle's feather into a solution of blue vitriol and applying it, but that failed to afford relief. One night I woke up with a strangling sensation, and in trying to call out I must have ruptured the abscess, for the relief from pain was immediate, and after I had been thoroughly relieved from the discharge I began to eat, and I thought I never would get enough. Had I been at home and had an attack of that kind I should have had doctors and nurses galore, and, no doubt, would have been sent off to Europe to restore my shattered health. As it was, I went on herd duty the next night, because I felt so much better and had had several consecutive nights in my blankets.

We got into a mess with a gentleman by the name of Ferris, who had a hay claim on Sand Creek, and who turned out to be a sort of blackmailer. He watched for the unwary drover who allowed his herd to trespass on what he called his hay meadow, and then demanded damages or else threatened "to have the law on yer." He had played the game successfully on several others, and would have caught us also had we not been warned by a neighbor of his, an old Irishman

named Foley, who did not approve of that mode of making a living.

Foley had quite a large bunch of cattle of his own, which he sold the year following for about \$100,000. He lived in a little cabin in the roughest way, and one evening Rand and I rode over to see him. While at supper we got news that the sheriff was on his way to arrest us, so we pulled out for the next county, only about ten miles distant, and there we waited for the outfit to overtake us.

It was a cold night and we had nothing but our saddle blankets, but we managed to get a fire started and kept comfortable. Rand had his time-book with the accounts and credits of the men in the pocket of his coat, but somehow lost it during our hurried flight. It meant quite a lot as he had paid out \$1,000 or so in wages and cash and had no other memorandum. We went all over the ground as near as we could, even running the risk of capture by the sheriff, trying to find it, but in vain, and no doubt would have had difficulty in straightening things out at the end, had not one of Foley's men found it by accident and in a peculiar way.

This cowboy was chasing some horses into the corral when his own slipped and fell, throw-

ing him quite a distance, but as he landed, his hand struck the book. He knew we had offered a reward of a hundred dollars to the finder, so he lost no time in notifying us and when we were ready to pay off the hands, the book had arrived. This probably was the luckiest tumble that man ever had.

A few days' journey brought us to what is known as Shirley Basin, named after an old-time stockman called John Quincy Adams Shirley. It was then, and remained for several years afterwards, a great feeding ground for elk and black-tail deer.

It hardly seems possible, but while we were coming along, not a day passed that we did not see bands of them, numbering from ten to two or three hundred, and not at all shy. The boys killed several while on herd as the elk came right up to the grazing cattle. One morning I had started ahead at daybreak and was riding back to camp about sun-up when I came to a steep bluff. I dismounted, led my horse, and on reaching the level of the top, I almost had an attack of buck fever. Within twenty feet of me stood a big buck and just beyond him a bunch of elk, which must have contained a hundred or more.

There was quite a thick frost fog, and I was

to leeward, so the conditions were A 1 for a slaughter. I counted thirteen big bulls and not one of them was more than a hundred and fifty yards away.

I made a jump for a .45-calibre Smith & Wesson revolver that I carried in a holster on my saddle and then lay down, so that my head was just showing, and I had a fine rest for my elbow. I just saw that big fellow dead at my feet, so certain was I of hitting him, but, alas ! the chamber opposite the trigger was empty and the cylinder would not revolve, owing to the rust I had allowed to get into the mechanism. I did everything to move it and even jumped up and down in my rage. Finally, in desperation, I hurled the pistol at the elk and I believe I hit him. Even that did not seem to scare the bunch ; I suppose the fog made me indistinct. At all events, I had to shout and wave my hat before I could get them running. I swore then that never again would I own a Smith & Wesson revolver, or any other that was not of the simplest kind, such as a Colt. My disappointment over losing that fine beast is acute even to this day.

Two or three days after crossing the basin, one of my partners and I were riding along near a stream called the Little Medicine Bow,



THE DISAPPOINTMENT OF A LIFETIME

when we discovered the fossil remains of an antediluvian animal. Our attention was attracted to it first because our horses flinched from what looked like sharp flint rocks. As there are practically no rocks in those parts, the soil being alkali or a decomposed sandstone, this seemed singular. Then we saw what looked like a bone, except that it was about three feet long and as big round as a man's leg. On investigation we found the vertebræ, which were about a foot thick and measured at least five feet from tip to tip of the ends of the ribs. One section was about all a man could lift.

The bones, or their fossilized reproduction, covered a space about sixty feet long by twenty or thirty wide, and were on top of a high mound. As we could not carry around several hundred pounds of antediluvian animal just for fun, we contented ourselves with taking the bearings of the spot which we thought would enable us to find it again, but we never did.

About two years afterwards I spoke about the matter to a prominent member of the U. S. Geological Survey while in Washington and gave him, as near as I could, a description of the locality, and I believe he sent some one up to try to find it, but without success. Not

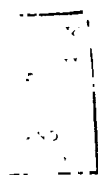
long ago, however, I saw that the grave-diggers from the Smithsonian Institute had found something with a big name, in the region of Como Lake, in Wyoming. As my defunct specimen was not more than five miles from that spot, I believe it is the same body, and really belongs to me by right of discovery. I might have gone down in history with my name linked to the hind legs of a Dinosaur.

We struck the Union Pacific Railroad at Wilcox, forty miles north of Laramie, and when I heard the sound of the whistle of an engine, I felt as though I were only a block or two away from Boston or New York. It was decided that I had better go on ahead to the ranch and notify our other partner that we were coming. One bright, clear morning, about the middle of October, I saddled up Coalie and headed for the home ranch, on the Little Laramie. My impulse was to go through that day, but my horse was pretty thin and I took it easy, stopping over night at a ranch, and arriving home early the following day.

The herd came in three days later, and one week more saw the end. For a few days we turned the cattle into an upland pasture, which we had fenced in, and permitted them to wan-



THE AUTHOR IN '78



der at will. Cattle, like human beings, are creatures of habit. Every morning at the usual time, the leaders, followed by most of the bunch, would march solemnly around the field close to the restraining fence. The same thing would happen, along towards evening only to a less extent. It took the leaders at least a week to realize that they had reached the end of their journey.

The first thing we did was to give all cripplés a doctoring and then pick out all animals whose brands were dim or blotched, in order to put a fresh one on. We found a good many that had no sign of our brand, but as they all showed signs of travel, we gave them the benefit of the doubt, and put our mark on them also. When this was finished we drove them off about ten or fifteen miles and scattered them out on several creek bottoms and left them to their fate. All through that winter we had men "line riding," which means that at stated intervals and always after a bad storm, men would go to leeward and drive them back as near as possible to where they had drifted from.

The horses were also doctored for sore backs, and those that were in the worst condition were kept up to be fed hay. The best of

them were put in the barn for use, and the balance were turned loose. The men were then taken to town and paid off, except the four we decided to keep through the winter.

We had been away eight months, and of this a large portion had been spent continuously in the saddle. It is impossible to reckon the distance travelled with any degree of accuracy, but allowing an average of twenty-five miles a day, which I consider quite conservative, for 120 days, would give us credit of 3000 miles on horseback. We had traversed, allowing for the twists and turns of the trail, about 1200 miles or at an average rate for the herd, ten miles per day. We lost two per cent. of our herd from straying and death, and it cost in the neighborhood of \$2.70 per head to get them down.

I have computed the distance made only from Pilot Rock to the home ranch, and the time that was actually consumed after we got regularly lined out on the trail. For two months prior to that, however, we had ridden over most of Umatilla, Union, and Wasco Counties in Oregon. I think without exaggeration, we can say that we had spent the most of the time in the saddle, and had experienced about all the discomforts and anxie-

ties which tend to ruin the temper and warp the nature of the most angelic of men. We had had Indian scares, stampedes, sickness and death, lack of water, or else too much, lack of sleep, rest and food, intense heat and blinding dust, freezing weather and snow. Add to these the natural cussedness of men, horses and cattle, with the ever-present fear that all the profits in the undertaking would vanish at any time by the cattle drowning in a river, rushing over a precipice while stampeding, or by the less tragic and picturesque, but equally efficacious way of dying from alkali poisoning, and you can realize something of the mental strain attendant on driving your own herd on the trail.

Some persons contend that life of this kind is healthy. My opinion is that it takes the constitution of a jackass to pull a man through and if he survives, you can't kill him with an axe. I had the constitution, and so far have survived the axe. Since I gave up the business, about nine years ago, I find that the asphalt of a large city to range on, with Delmonico's or Sherry's for watering places, and any hotel on Fifth Avenue for a camping-ground suits me. Any one stuck on flannel shirts and camps in the Adirondacks can have them.

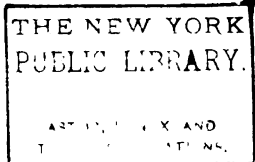
Bucking the Sagebrush

Then roll the drums slowly,
And play the fifes lowly,
Play the dead-march as you carry me on
Take me to "Boot-Hill,"
And throw the sod over me,
For I 'm a poor cowboy
And I knows I done wrong.



SKETCH MAP
SHOWING THE ROUTE
FROM
DOTT'S BRIDGE,
TO
ARAMIE, WYO.





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